

Disability Now



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Four charities take their campaign to the party conferences

A new Manifesto for community care

The Community Care Campaigners are on the warpath again. Mindful of an approaching General Election, Barnardo's, MENCAP, MIND and The Spastics Society – the biggest providers of services to mentally handicapped and mentally ill people – have produced their own 10-point Manifesto and guide for politicians and policy makers. These are forming the basis for breakfast discussions at the party conferences (see page 3).

Here are the main points of the Manifesto:

- 1 Participation.** People with disabilities must play a full part in all decisions which affect their lives. The Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act must be fully resourced and implemented.
- 2 Finance.** Expenditure on mental health and handicap services must be increased by £500 over 5 years. The DHSS must set up a central bridging fund to finance transition from hospital to community care.
- 3 Joint Planning.** The Government must establish a Community Care Committee of relevant ministers which would report annually to Parliament and receive reports from regional health authorities on the effectiveness of joint planning of community care.
- 4 Income.** A comprehensive disability income, costs allowance and a comprehensive carers benefit should be introduced and paid as of right.
- 5 Support Services.** The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 should be amended to place a duty on local authorities to provide respite care and day services.
- 6 Housing.** Money should be earmarked for ordinary housing in the community (with necessary support services) for people with disabilities. The Government should make good the 50 per cent cut (since 1979) in the Housing Investment Programme and the sevenfold drop in housing subsidy.
- 7 Residential Care.** The standards and procedures of the Code of Practice, *Home Life*, should apply to statutory as well as voluntary and private sector residential care.
- 8 Education.** Local education authorities should fulfil their statutory duties under the 1944 Education Act and provide full time education to age 19 for all handicapped students – and ultimately to age 25.
- 9 Staff.** Staff redundancy must be avoided in the transition from hospital to community care and redeployment and retraining made available to current staff.
- 10 Discrimination.** Anti-discrimination legislation which outlaws discrimination on the grounds of disability should be introduced.



Blackpool meeting: Michael Meacher MP, Labour's social services spokesman (right) with John Cox and the Community Campaigners' guide and mug.

The cost of implementing the Manifesto has been put at £½ billion.

John Cox, director of the Spastics Society, argues that the Community Care Campaigners are not living in Cloud-cuckoo-land. "The amount of employment needed to provide the services could offset the costs of unemployment," he says.

Community care should be an election issue, he believes. It is not only about those leaving long-stay hospitals, but about the 90 per cent already living in the community cared for by families and friends who live under great

physical, emotional and financial stress.

"There are 6 million voters there", he says. "You tell me the party who's not interested in 6 million votes."



“... neo-natal care is one of the greatest NHS success stories” – Edwina Currie

The crisis the Government is neglecting

The new junior health minister, Mrs Edwina Currie, has upset The Spastics Society by claiming that neonatal intensive care is one of the great success stories of the National Health Service.

Although the development of technology and skills for neonatal care (care of babies in the first month of life) is a success, the lack of resources for these facilities in many parts of the country is a “damning indictment” of our society, according to John Cox, director of The Spastics Society.

Mrs Currie, speaking on Channel 4's *What it's Worth* on 23 September, asked the public “please not always to turn to the Health Service but to look after themselves better”.

Yet in the same programme, a new-born baby was reported to have died from an easily-curable kidney complaint because the specialist staff that might have saved him were not available.

This is not an isolated case. According to Neil McIntosh, a consultant paediatrician at St George's Hospital who is carrying out a national survey of neonatal units, in 2 regional health authorities 14 babies could not be placed in 1984. Eight subsequently died.

The television programme was broadcast on the same day that Mrs Currie publicly rejected the findings of a report from Bristol University which said that poverty in the north of England

caused low birth weights, permanent sickness and premature death. She said that northerners' ignorance about smoking, drinking and diet was to blame.

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CareLine cut?

The new CareLine coach service between London mainline stations and Heathrow is under threat if more disabled people don't use it.

Though numbers are increasing at the rate of about 10 per cent a week, the average number of people on a bus is only 4. To break even, Alder Valley North, the company who runs the service, needs 16 people per bus.

“We estimate that we are 40 weeks away from viability and that is possibly longer than we can wait,” says Andrew Brad-dock, the assistant manager. “We are losing money as a company and we can't go on indefinitely doing that.”

In an effort to attract more customers, Alder Valley has cut fares to Heathrow. It now costs £4 for a ticket from Paddington, Euston, King's Cross and Victoria to Heathrow, and £3.50 from the last pick-up point, Victoria Coach Station.

Although London Transport's double-decker Air Bus with 60 seats is cheaper, at £3, it has fewer pick-up points and is not geared to wheelchairs.

The free CareLine brochure has a map and timetable. Tel: (0734) 79875.

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Letters to the Editor

Disability Now 12 Park Crescent London W1N 4EQ

The MSC should be encouraged, says RNID

I was very pleased to see the article "Why YTS is not meeting the needs of young disabled people" (*DN*, September), because it is important that the lack of appropriate employment opportunity for disabled people is highlighted as often as possible.

However, despite the lack of employment opportunity for disabled people, the title for the article was a little harsh on the MSC.

The problem in the case of MSC is that they are not adequately meeting the needs of young disabled people. But they have made a start and should be encouraged to build on their work as rapidly as possible.

The Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID) recently made submissions to both the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Employment and to the MSC congratulating them on their recognition that there is a problem to overcome.

The problem is not theirs alone. Training must be provided, as the article points out, to individual requirements. But special facilities must be made available, so that deaf people can, for example, be assisted to understand the theory as well as the practice. There are readers for blind people but the equivalent for deaf people is not available. The situation is not just technical support but the needs of many can be met by using skilled personnel and careful planning.

The Communication Service, which is provided for YTS, is a major advance but equivalent schemes must be made available in Adult Training.

In parallel, we would emphasise the need to promote understanding and good practice amongst training bodies and em-

ployers. The "Code of Good Practice" was welcomed as a valuable contribution to this work. MSC need now to support more specialised and targeted awareness programmes in the future.

None of us, whether in Government or as employers or voluntary agencies working on behalf of disabled people must feel that enough is being done. As long as disabled people are being discriminated against in employment there is much to do.

In coming months and years, the RNID will be trying to play its part. We hope that both MSC and the Select Committee took note of our submissions and will play theirs.

Michael Whitlam
Chief Executive
The Royal National Institute for the Deaf
105 Gower Street
London WC1E 6AH

How to shame Orange Badge abusers?

Your readers will all have seen the poster issued in the September issue of *Disability Now*, showing a disabled person's parking space with the words - "Is this the only time you put yourself in our place?"

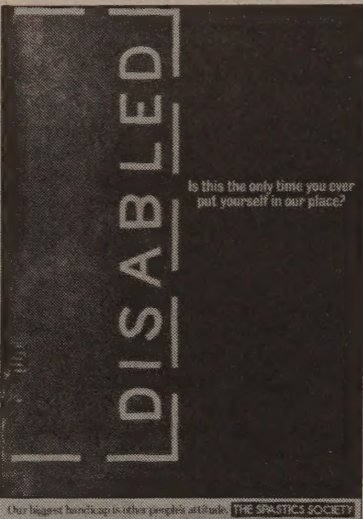
Because of the abuse of such parking spaces by able-bodied people I suggested at a recent meeting of this committee that this excellent design could be reduced down to A5 size (half A4), printed both sides, and issued in quantity to all disabled drivers and passengers throughout the country. They could then affix it to the windscreens of those cars parked in reserved spaces and not displaying an Orange Badge.

Many of the representatives of our member organisations were enthusiastic about the idea as

one way of trying to reduce the incidence of abuse. Perhaps RADAR (Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation) should consider the possibility of organising this on behalf of disabled people generally. I imagine that The Spastics Society would encourage this as it would benefit its members as well as others.

Tim Shapley
Secretary
Joint Committee on Mobility for the Disabled
9 Moss Close
Pinner
Middx HA5 3AY

What do other readers think of this idea? Please let us know - Editor.



DLF defends its kitchens

As an addendum to her review of DLF's newly published *Kitchen Sense For Disabled People* Lin Berwick commented on her visit to our Aid and Equipment Centre.

On reading this we were all most distressed to learn that she did not feel either of the kitchen displays was useful. It may be that she did not understand the reasons behind the layout of the areas and the choice of equipment.

The "In Touch" kitchen was designed and mounted by the staff of the BBC programme of that name and shows an attractive and functional layout for a person with a visual handicap who is otherwise mobile.

Most of the equipment is chosen to demonstrate ordinary household utensils which have relevant features and for which adaptations can be made to suit individual needs, with a few specially designed items relevant only to visually handicapped people. Its "ordinariness" is one of the main attractions for it demonstrates that there is often no need to use "disabled" equipment but only to carefully select from the general market.

Our other kitchen area is not intended to be an actual layout of a kitchen for any particular person - it is intended to show as many design features and as much equipment as possible so that any disabled person can relate them to their own needs.

While Ms Berwick's wish to have displays from all the companies producing kitchen units and equipment for disabled people is endorsed by us all at DLF, it is impracticable - unless funds became available to hire a vast exhibition area and this is certainly beyond our means.

I do hope that Ms Berwick's remarks will not discourage readers of *Disability Now* from visiting the Centre - and indeed I hope she may return so that we can discuss ways of improving our kitchen areas.

We are only too well aware that we haven't yet achieved an ideal balance of exhibits or

enough space for everything and many of the past improvements have been made following feedback from visitors.

The Aid and Equipment Centre is open 9.30am-5pm, Monday to Friday. We do ask people to make an appointment first.

Elizabeth Fanshawe OBE Dip-COT

Director
Disabled Living Foundation
380-384 Harrow Road
London W9 2HU

Hydrotherapy pool faces £10,000 VAT bill

We failed in our bid to avoid the burden of VAT on the hydrotherapy pool at Trengweth School which is run by The Spastics Society for the spastic children of Plymouth, South West Devon and Cornwall.

This means that we now have to find another £10,000 on top of the remaining £25,000 that needs to be raised. (The whole project will cost £85,000.)

When we started fundraising the pool was not eligible for VAT, but a change in the regulations this year means that we now have to pay. As a result there will be a long delay before we can have this special bath for children who are so badly disabled that they are unable to use the main pool. These children will be the victims of government policy. I hope all MPs can sleep easily.

We are going to protest in the only way we know - fundraising! On Sunday 26 October at 2pm on Plymouth Hoe we shall be holding our Britain Stroll, a leisurely 3-mile stroll. Please come along!

Raymond McSweeney
Secretary
Plymouth Helping Hands
10 Bickham Road
St Budeaux, Plymouth PL5 1SA

Have you tried...

Mr Lumb's letter about employment (*DN*, September), makes me wonder whether he has seen a copy of a recent publication by the Department of the Employment and Manpower Services Commission regarding their employment, training and enterprise programmes.

In this booklet (entitled *Action for Jobs - Opening More Doors*), on page 32, it says that "financial help can be given to registered disabled people who are unable to use public transport because of their disability, and so incur extra costs in getting to work. Assistance is given towards the cheapest, reliable alternative to public transport, up to a maximum grant of £64.25 per week."

I hope this is helpful!

Jane Reynolds
Director
The Westminster Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults
London W9 3HL

I note with interest the letter from Mr Lumb (*DN*, September) and his difficulty - as an employer - in finding suitably qualified disabled people.

If he is requiring persons with some professional qualification or experience, I wonder if he has tried advertising in the Association for Disabled Professionals' Newsletter. Members of that Association would definitely have knowledge of the important issues to which he refers.

Their Secretary is Mrs P. Marchant, The Stables, 73 Pound Road, Banstead, Surrey SM7 2HU.
Ann Gabell
Droitwich, Worcs.

(sic)

DN's diary column
by Simon Crompton

Schizo

The tendency of psychiatrists from Soviet bloc countries to diagnose political dissidents as mentally ill, is, according to Harold Merskey writing in the *British Journal of Psychiatry*, based on their genuine belief in the existence of a condition called "sluggish schizophrenia". Documented symptoms include single-mindedness, fixed ideas and conflict with authority, associated with delusions of persecution.

IT!

The British Computer Society's 2nd annual conference had the unfortunate title of "Are the Disabled Missing out on IT?". Besides relegating disabled people to the status of an adjective, the title might also mislead those of us who are not sufficiently children of the computer age to still associate IT with extra-curricular activities behind the bicycle shed rather than Information Technology.

Curried

According to newly-appointed health minister Edwina Currie, people from the North of England have only themselves to blame for their poor health (southerners being obviously more enlightened). Last month she criticised a report from Bristol University saying that poverty in the North Regional Health Authority was a cause of premature death, permanent sickness and low birth weight. Speaking in Newcastle she said: "I honestly don't think the problem has anything to do with poverty. My family grew up in Liverpool and they didn't have 2 beans, but as a result of good food, good family and good rest, they grew up fit and well." Obviously mindful of her parents' lack of beans, Mrs Currie urged the North to eat more vegetables and natural fibres and drink more milk. Her dietary expertise has already earned the health minister the not-altogether affectionate nickname of "Vegetable Currie". And at the Liberal Party Conference in Eastbourne one of the most popular souvenirs was a badge reading "Northern Liberals say 'Take-away Currie'".

WATCH IT!

Cripple beaten to death at home. Headline in *The Guardian*, 5 August, 1986. The story referred to the subject as a "person with a disability" - Judith Oliver.

The show in fact rather got its callipers in a twist, if you'll pardon such a tasteless expression, and ended up sometimes confusing laughing at suffering with laughing at sufferers. **Tony Flanagan**, *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 17 July, 1986 - Simon Crompton.

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The Community Care Campaigners - Barnardo's, MENCAP, MIND and The Spastics Society - have once more taken the message of community care to the annual round of political party conferences.

The first breakfast meeting, on 17 September in Harrogate, was with the SDP, and those who came welcomed the clear, concise literature which the CCCs had produced.

Shirley Williams, President of the SDP, spoke about the work which the SDP Working Party on Community Care had been doing. Its Green Paper, "Care in the Community", closely reflected the views of the 4 organisations, particularly on the need for consumer involvement in planning services.

Concern was expressed about the cost of the Community Care Manifesto and doubts about how soon all the measures could be introduced.

The SDP is not a party of soft options or unrealistic promises. Obviously the experience of gaining power or holding the balance of power in a number of local authorities has taught SDP councillors and grassroots workers of the need to convince local people that community services are worth paying for.

County Cllr. Peter Lee from Cambridgeshire talked of the massive gap in services and finances which would have to be filled to achieve effective community care.

The theme of finance was continued in the discussions at the Liberal Party breakfast meeting the following week.

David Penhaligon MP, Liberal Treasury spokesman, declared that after a quick reckoning of the 10 points of the Manifesto the total cost of the programme

A toast to Community Care

Amanda Jordan reports on a new round of breakfast meetings

David Willis, Monitor Press



Mugs up! The directors of MENCAP, MIND, Barnardo's and The Spastics Society raise their community care mugs - printed with the Manifesto - with Liberals in Eastbourne. From l to r: Julie Horton, Liberal transport panel; Roger Singleton of Barnardo's; Andrew Kerslake, Liberal social services panel; Michael Meadowcroft MP; Stuart Etherington, ppc for Tottenham; John Cox of The Spastics Society; David Penhaligon, MP; Alan Leaman, Liberal education panel; Simon Hebditch of Bradford CSV; Chris Heginbotham of MIND; Brian Rix of MENCAP.

would be £3.5 billion. Whilst that figure was disputed, it was agreed that to see an acceptable level of community care provision, a significant increase in resources was needed.

It was agreed that whilst the political battles on community care had been won at both a local and national level, the problem remained of how to implement the policy. But Sir Brian Rix warned that some people still feared the development of community care.

Michael Meadowcroft MP believed that it was essential for people with disabilities to take part in politics if services were to improve. As campaign organiser for the Liberal Party, he was trying to involve more people with disabilities in the party.

Disability to be a priority issue, says Michael Meacher

In Blackpool, on 2 October, the Community Care Campaigners

were joined by Labour MPs and local government representatives. Three well-known figures in the disability world were there: Alf Morris MP, Tom Clarke MP and Bob Wareing MP.

Michael Meacher MP, Labour's social services spokesman, said that the Labour Party was prepared to make disability a priority issue. A *Charter for Community Care* will be launched in the New Year, he said, which will be the basis for a major campaign.

Continuing the optimistic mood of the conference, he talked with some certainty of the next Labour government and its plans. He was hopeful that effective community care would form a part of their main priority for creating new jobs, as care in the community was a labour-intensive policy.

A comprehensive disability income and costs allowance would be part of Labour's programme, said Mr Meacher. He invited the CCCs to comment upon Labour's plans.

The problem of finance was picked up by Tom Clarke. He spoke of the support which the local authority association had given in principle to his recent Act, but their reluctance to accept further statutory responsibilities unless adequate resources were provided.

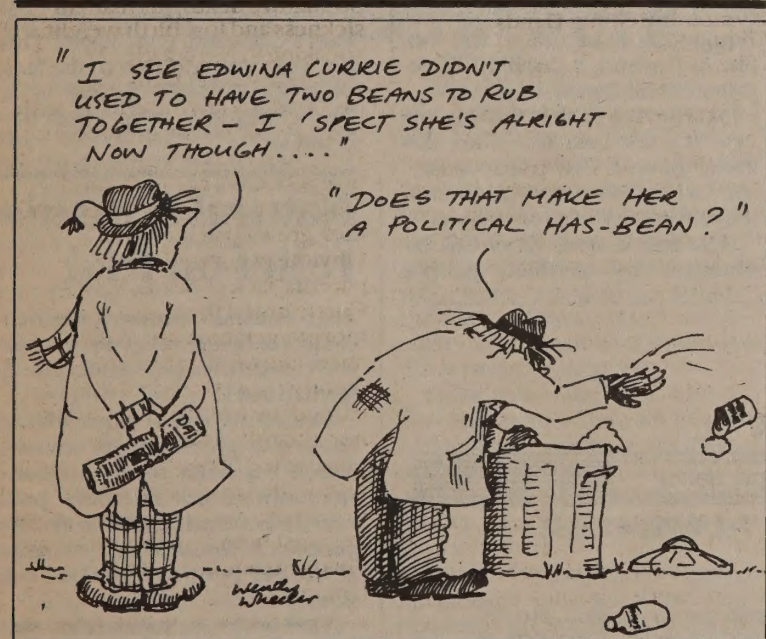
The representatives from the Association of County Councils reinforced this.

At the end of the meeting, Glenys Kinnock congratulated the CCCs on the Manifesto and the guide. As a former teacher of mentally handicapped children, she knew at first hand the discrimination they faced when reaching adulthood. "You deserve success in your campaign," she said.

Buy a mug at Naidex!

The "community care campaigners' mug," printed with the 10 points of the Manifesto (abbreviated) and the logos of the 4 Community Care Campaigners, will be on sale at the *Disability Now* stand (No 127) at Naidex, price £1.

Come and buy one and help publicise the cause.



Wendy Wheeler's reaction to Edwina Currie, see Sic.

ICA disappointment for many

Thousands of married or co-habiting women are finding that the extension of Invalid Care Allowance announced by the Government in June is leaving them no better off.

This is because of an "overlapping benefits" regulation which stops the payment of dependency addition to a disabled person receiving supplementary benefit, unemployment benefit, invalid benefit or other allowances by the same amount as ICA, ie £23.25 a week.

The Association of Carers has accused the Government of "masterly ineptitude" in not publicising the situation.

The ICA Steering Group, which represents 50 disability, carers' and women's organisations, and has campaigned for the extension of ICA, is also open to criticism for not stating the

situation more clearly.

"Unfortunately the extension of ICA has not meant that the anomalies within the benefit system have all been resolved," says Amanda Jordan, chairman of the group. "Our leaflet clearly states the position of married women who may be affected by overlapping benefits. But discrimination against them has been ended and that in itself is a great victory."

Although about 30,000 women will be no better off, Judith Oliver, director of the Association of Carers, still recommends that they apply for ICA because it will earn them national insurance credits.

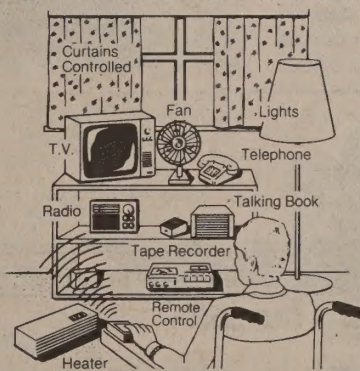
Claims can be made up to 31 December.

The leaflet is available, free, from the The Spastics Society.

possum

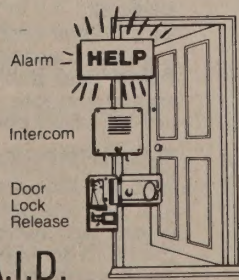
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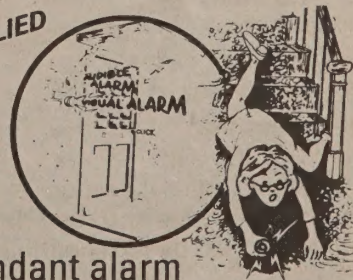
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Habinteg hits 1000th home



William Benyon, MP for Milton Keynes and Deborah Ounsted of Habinteg give the Trimmells the keys to their new home.

Habinteg, the housing association which specialises in mixed developments for disabled and able-bodied people, has handed over the keys of their 1000th house to its delighted new occupants.

Ian and Janet Trimmell, and their 15 month old daughter Philippa, moved into their specially adapted bungalow in Oldbrook,

Milton Keynes, on 6 September. Janet has cp and uses a wheelchair. Although their previous home had a stairlift and a ramp to the front door, she could not use them while holding the baby. Steep steps into the back garden meant she couldn't take Philippa out there either.

She has only one complaint about the new house. "The kitch-

en is not as well equipped as I hoped it would be," she said. "But I make more use of it than many disabled people. Apart from that it's wonderful."

Habinteg was set up in 1970 with the aim of enabling disabled people to live independent lives in an ordinary setting. Oldbrook is one of many mixed developments around the country now. Twenty of the 86 houses are specially designed for people with disabilities, with low-level kitchens and accessible toilets and showers. All the houses are built for wheelchair access, so disabled residents can visit their neighbours.

Ten of the bungalows have been allocated to Buckinghamshire Social Services to provide an "extra care" facility for severely disabled tenants. A team of 6 home helps provide cover from 8am to 10.30pm 7 days a week and a community assistant, who lives on site, is always available for emergencies.

Alex Moira, chairman of Habinteg, said the association's aim is to give disabled people the chance to live normal lives in the community. "We don't believe in building little ghettos for the disabled, around the corner and out of sight," he said.

Habinteg Housing Association, Head Office, 10 Nottingham Place, London W1 3FL. Tel: 01-935 6931.



Inaugurating the loo are Sheila Hudson, Westminster's Lord Mayor Mrs Terence Mallinson, and Alain Brousse of Street Equipment.

There's welcome relief for disabled shoppers

The country's busiest shopping street now has the first Superloo for disabled people in central London.

The new easy access toilet is just off Oxford Street, in Balderston Street, near Selfridges.

Westminster's Lord Mayor, Cllr Mrs Terence Mallinson and Alain Brousse, managing director of the manufacturer, Street Equipment inaugurated the loo. Sheila Hudson, a disabled Westminster resident tried it out.

Ms Hudson gave it the thumbs up. "It's the best toilet for disabled people I've tried so far," she said. "It's very clean and there is plenty of room inside."

The loo is free. Keys can be obtained by disabled people

from Westminster Council or RADAR.

If it proves a success 4 more are planned. One will be on Leicester Square and one just off Edgware Road. The sites for the other 2 have not yet been decided.

Not to be outdone, the City has also installed its first Superloo for disabled people next to St Paul's Cathedral coach park. This is a welcome addition to the facilities for disabled people at St Paul's, which is wheelchair accessible.

Natural arthritis relief on trial

Two "natural" substances which claim to bring relief to people with arthritis are undergoing further tests.

One is an extract from New Zealand's green-lipped mussel which has been shown to considerably reduce and help prevent inflammation in rats and in people. A freeze dried extract, SEATONE is sold in health food shops.

The other is Royal Jelly, the substance fed to queen bees. Research in the USA, Italy, France and the USSR has shown that it improves the vitality of elderly people and helps those with arthritis.

Now a 3-month test is going on in an old people's home in Loughborough using Regina royal jelly capsules (available from health food stores). *Royal jelly, a guide to nature's richest health food* by Irene Stein (£1.99) is selling well.

Executive Council candidate

Alan Maynard's disability is a form of arthritis, present since birth, not cp as mentioned in last month's DN. Mr Maynard has 2 disabled children.

Self-defence

The ansaphone number for the self-defence course for women with disabilities mentioned in What's On last month should have read 01-837 8774.

Prize-winning hot water bottle needs manufacturer

The 1986 Design and Industries Association's Melchett Memorial award has been a showcase for clever new designs useful to elderly or disabled people.

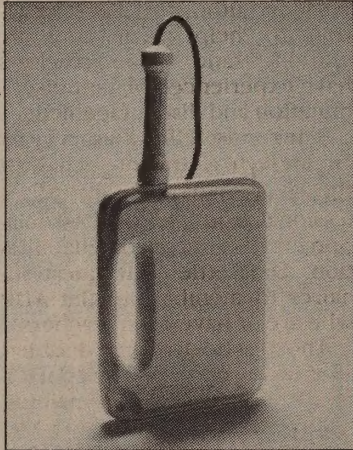
First prize of £1,250 went to James Holmes-Siedle for a plug-in hot water bottle which eliminates the risk of scalding. Hot water bottles are especially useful for elderly and disabled people, but filling them with boiling water can be dangerous. The plug-in bottle avoids this because it is filled with gel which is heated by

an element inside. When it is ready you simply unplug it and take it to bed. The gel does not get as hot as water but it remains warm longer.

The bottle is not yet on sale but Mr Holmes-Siedle is now approaching large manufacturers and retail chains.

"I think it would be useful to everyone, but especially to people who have trouble filling conventional bottles," he said. "I hope it will soon be for sale in the shops."

The Design Council

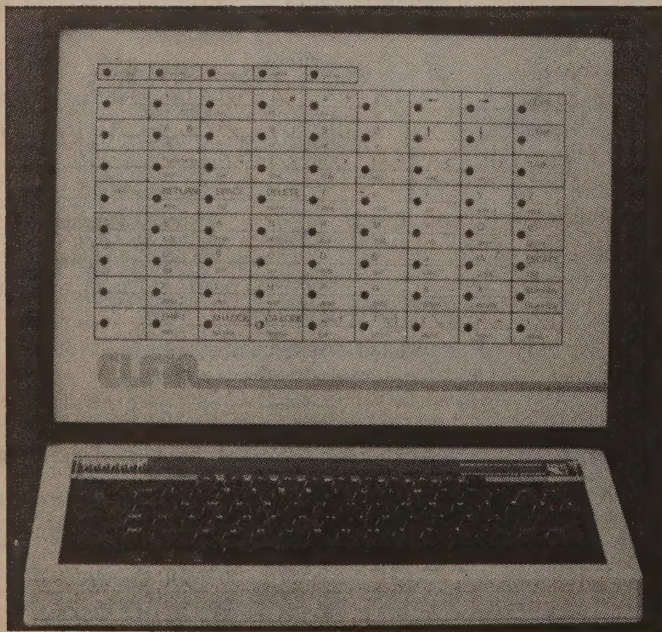


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60 phrases of 2 seconds duration are available in any language, accent or dialect and quality of speech is better than that heard over the telephone. The unit is battery operated and totally portable.

THE ELFIN PORTABLE COMMUNICATOR

This portable communication device allows text to be written, stored, transferred to host computer, printed or spoken. Using one or two switches the most severely disabled can now use the PC to do anything from driving a wheelchair to operating a cordless phone. The Portable Communicator can also be used in conjunction with My Voice to offer a unique combination of facilities.

CODED INPUT DEVICE

This coded input device offers a very fast input method using any two switches and an audible scan, standard software operates in a normal fashion.

Elfin Systems Ltd

Electronics For Independence

Elfin Systems specialise in offering the most severely physically disabled the most comprehensive facilities. These include communication aids, environmental control facilities and mobility.

Award-winning designer sets up his own business



The young designer of an award-winning safety device which stops wheelchairs rolling backwards has set up his own business to manufacture the product.

Andrew Lavender, 19, of Clwyd, was runner-up in the 1985 Young Engineer of Great Britain competition with the wheelchair anti-roll device (WARD) he designed for an 'A'-level project.

Last month he won the £1000 Comino Trust prize for the product making the most progress towards commercial manufacture since then.

With his prize money and the help of friends (ironically called Ward as well), he has set up an engineering company and bought the tools and machinery to manufacture the device.

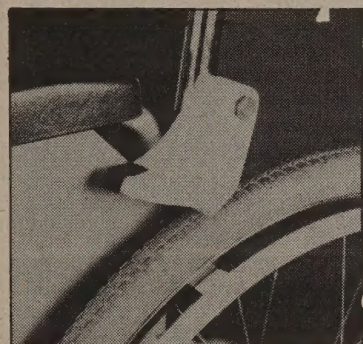
Mr and Mrs Ward have a disabled child and were keen to help Andrew get started. "We have fitted the clip to our daughter's wheelchair and it works wonderfully," said Mrs Ward. "We want others to be able to

benefit from Andrew's invention too."

The first orders are already rolling in but they would like to see the device become DHSS approved and ultimately a standard fitting for all wheelchairs.

It has been highly praised by the many disabled people who have tried it. Disabled children at Connah's Quay High School in Clwyd found it so effective the school has ordered several already.

Andrew Lavender has been given free help and advice from Quo-tec, a technological consulting company. Each year they choose the most promising ideas from amongst the entries to benefit from a £9,000 fund put up by the Comino Trust. The money is used to develop the ideas to manufacture stage.



The wheelchair anti-roll device is available for £30 from The Old Post Office, Minera, Wrexham, Clwyd. It is easy to fit and needs only one screw. Please state what kind of wheelchair you have and allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

Wheelchair cab at work

The first London taxi adapted to carry disabled passengers in their wheelchairs is now at work on the streets of the capital.

The conversion of the cab, by London Taxi International, was announced in *Disability Now* in June. Now it has started a 6 month trial with Radio Taxis.

Passengers enter and leave the taxi on ramps, and the wheelchair is secured inside by belts.

Josephine Reilly, of Southwark Disablement Association, who tried it out said: "It was very comfortable for me, but I have a small chair and I am only small myself. For someone taller or in a larger chair lack of headroom would definitely be a problem."

London Taxi International have noted the problem for future conversions.

For the moment the taxi is the only one of its kind. Drivers have been asked to pay to have their cabs converted, which will cost £1,700. "Few can afford that," said Jack Moss of Radio Taxis.

The new design is intended to make the Taxicard scheme available to passengers who find it difficult to get in and out of their wheelchairs.



Josephine Reilly tries out the wheelchair cab.

Brian Howard, of London Regional Transport's Unit for Disabled Passengers, which administers the scheme, welcomed the cab as an important development. "For some disabled people the Taxicard opened up the outside world," he said. "But others who were not able to transfer themselves from their wheelchairs into a cab could not use the scheme at all before."

From this month all 33 London boroughs will again be part of Taxicard. Sutton and Hillingdon pulled out when the GLC was abolished and the boroughs had to fund the scheme themselves.

Sutton considered setting up its own subsidised taxi plan but after the local elections, in which this was a major issue, the borough returned to Taxicard. Hillingdon followed suit on 1 October. Residents in these areas will once again be able to make use of the subsidised service.

To order the new cab ring Radio Taxis, tel: 01-272 5471. Unfortunately as there is only one you may have to wait your turn.

Lifeline appeal raises the alarm

Barry Finch

Radio London and Help the Aged have launched an appeal for money to buy Lifeline alarm systems for elderly people this winter.

Each unit (a telephone system and pendant) costs £334 so, as a spokesman for Help the Aged put it, "we are looking for as much money as we can lay hands on."

Radio London has already raised enough for 2 Lifelines and Help the Aged and the manufacturers, Tunstall Telecom, have between them contributed another 5.

The appeal runs for 6 months. Contributions can be paid into Abbey National Building Society offices or sent to the Radio London Telephone Alarm Appeal for Help the Aged, Room 63912, Help the Aged, St James' Walk, London EC1R 0BE.

Any elderly or elderly/disabled person who spends a lot of time alone and would like to be considered for a Lifeline should contact the Lifeline Department of Help the Aged.

William Hewitt (right) receives a Lifeline from Anna Wing - Lou Beale of EastEnders.



Disabled teachers face discrimination

Teachers who become disabled are likely to lose their jobs, even though they are perfectly able to continue working, a recent report has revealed.

Many authorities take no action to help them continue working, and some teachers have experienced blatant discrimination and discouragement.

The report follows a survey by Dr Melvyn Kettle on behalf of the Association of Disabled Professionals and the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation. Dr Kettle sent questionnaires to members of the ADP who are or have been teachers.

Those who became disabled after taking up teaching reported more difficulties in remaining employed than those who were disabled before they entered the profession.

Forty-five people completed the questionnaire. Although all but seven were of working age, only 15 were in full-time jobs.

Of those teachers who lost their livelihood most of them blamed problems of access and the negative attitude of local education authorities rather than their disability.

A common complaint was that the LEA saw problems where none existed. A teacher who became disabled after 20 years of work said: "One of the most hurt-

ful things is the apparent apathy towards even allowing you to try to see if you can cope - how do you know what you can do if you are not given the chance?"

Some teachers experienced blatant discrimination. One woman, although she passed the LEA's medical examination, was forbidden to teach French by the schools' inspector because of her paralysed facial muscles.

Another teacher who had difficulty walking was refused the right to work by the education authority although the headmaster was prepared to accept her as a full-time member of staff.

The lack of lifts in schools proved a problem for many. A woman with multiple sclerosis was limited to teaching in one building and could not use the library as it was in a building with no lift. Another was allo-

cated a classroom some distance from the staffroom. At breaktime she stayed in the classroom and frequently missed impromptu staff meetings.

In his report Dr Kettle says: "Given the investment made in educating and training teachers it is hardly efficient management to dispense with their services because of difficulties with mobility - especially when these could be reduced or eliminated by making changes to the environment."

Government funding is not used often enough to adapt buildings and provide work aids, he says.

The Employment of Disabled Teachers by Melvyn Kettle, price £3 plus £1 p & p, is available from RADAR, 25 Mortimer Street, London W1N 8AB.

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Portage celebrates 10 years in Britain

Pauline Wright reports on a successful partnership between parents and professionals

Over a hundred people must have been disappointed to miss the 10th Anniversary Portage Conference in Winchester last month. It was heavily oversubscribed.

The weekend was particularly memorable because many international representatives were there as well as some of the originators of the Portage model.

Portage began in the University of Wisconsin in 1969. It was originally used in the town of Portage, hence the name, and was designed to help the parents of pre-school handicapped children fulfil their role as their child's first teacher.

Portage gives parents a greater understanding of their child's learning difficulties and helps them to teach effectively. The Portage checklist establishes what a child *can* do and from this a programme is devised detailing the next steps needed to help his or her development. The home teacher visits weekly; achievable small skills are practised gradually, building up to greater skills, and the whole process becomes a true partnership which gives enormous support to the families involved.

The partnership aspect was highlighted at the conference by the presence of so many parents and their children. Indeed, parents contributed some of the most interesting presentations.

The conference reflected both the early beginnings and the present world-wide spread of the Portage teaching method. There were delegates from Japan, India, Gaza and New Zealand.

From the United States we had David and Marsha Shearer, project director and staff training director respectively of the original research team.

It was fascinating to hear the account of the early days and of the trials and errors involved when breaking new ground. Parents had not before been re-



Doing what comes naturally: a mother teaching her child.

garded as capable of teaching their handicapped children, let alone of being involved in planning programmes evaluating progress.

George Jessien, present director in Wisconsin, discussed present and future developments, interestingly paralleled by Mollie White, Sean Cameron and other prominent Portage workers here.

For me, however, the seminar given by Rashid Syed and Jennifer Smith, educational psychologists from Brent, will be the one that is remembered when the others sink into the mists of memory. It gave us some insight into the differences of working with ethnic minority groups, particularly of Asian origin. It had the essential virtues of making one want to learn more, of making one more aware of the

need to be sensitive to different cultures and values and above all of our own ignorance of those cultures and values.

As for the future of Portage, that seems assured. From Dr Alfred Kushlik's small research project in Winchester, it has expanded far beyond what could have been envisaged 10 years ago. Last year it received £1.2m in educational support grant to set up schemes in areas where none existed.

There are now over 200 projects and, hopefully, as more educational authorities recognise their obligations to the under-fives with special needs, there will be many more.

Pauline Wright is leader of the Early Childhood Support Team and senior Portage worker in Croydon.

London transport fails nearly 1½m disabled people

At least 465,000 elderly and disabled people find it difficult or impossible to use public transport in London. Of these 95,000 cannot use a bus at all.

This is the disturbing finding of the first ever survey of transport for disabled people in London, published last month by the Greater London Association for Disabled People (GLAD).

Social isolation is one of the worst effects of transport handicap says the report, *All Change*. It reveals that of those disabled and elderly people who have trouble using public transport:

- 145,000 never visit friends or relatives
- 120,000 never make a shopping trip
- 85,000 do not go out in any one week.

The tube is the least accessible form of transport because of the stairs and escalators. Trains pose a problem for fewer people, but the wide gap between train and platform makes it difficult to get on and off.

Only 20 per cent of transport-handicapped people have trouble using buses. Small changes, such as more seats at bus shelters and an extra step on the bus would help many of these, suggests the report. "You often have to wait 30- to 45 minutes for a bus. I have to stand at the bus stop and I can't stand for that long," was a typical complaint.

GLAD calls on the Government to acknowledge the transport problems of disabled people in London and to provide more money to tackle them.

Door to door transport, such as Dial-a-Ride and Taxicard, must be increased for those people who will never be able to use public transport, says the report. It suggests that British Rail, London Regional Transport and the door-to-door schemes should get together to provide a co-ordinated plan.

Responding to the report, Chris Austin, British Rail's regional planning officer, said that money is the main problem in designing trains and stations which cater for disabled people.

"The social benefits of investment are not added into the equation," he said. "We are not able to do that."

Tony Shaw, head of London Regional Transport's Unit for Disabled Passengers, welcomed the report. "It will help us identify our priorities in introducing further changes," he said.

He noted that since the survey was carried out last year several of the suggested improvements had been started. New bus designs, more seats at bus shelters and induction loops at Underground ticket offices are all being introduced. "Obviously there is much more to be done," he said.

He cited the expansion of the Dial-a-Ride and Taxicard schemes, and the introduction of Mobility Buses and Careline, as positive advances.

"I believe that money spent on providing transport for mobility handicapped people will be proved to be a much better use of resources than the alternative cost of taking services to those trapped in their own homes or living in institutional accommodation," said Mr Shaw.

So far the Government has not responded to the report.

All Change: a consumer study of public transport handicap in Greater London is available for £6.00 (plus 90p p&p) from GLAD, 336 Brixton Road, London SW9 7AA.

New association

The London Dial-a-Ride Users' Association came into being last month. The new organisation replaces the Federation of London Dial-a-Rides. It hopes to provide an opportunity for users to get together and press for improvements in the quality and quantity of the service and will offer information and advice to DaR users.

London Dial-a-Ride Users' Association, St Margarets, 25 Leighton Road, London NW5 2QD Tel: 01-482 2325.

Blind parking

The Royal National Institute for the Blind has condemned as "preposterous" and "irresponsible" a Department of Transport proposal to reform the orange badge parking scheme for disabled people.

The proposal, part of a discussion paper issued by the Transport Department in August, says that "blind people would only receive a badge if they have considerable mobility problems". Currently, all blind people qualify automatically.

In a letter to the Secretary of State for Transport, John Moore, RNIB director general Ian Bruce says: "It is irresponsible for others to suggest that blind people do not have considerable mobility problems. All blind people have difficulties in getting around, and should have the right to claim this badge which allows them to be driven close to where they need to be."

The scheme is under review because of evidence of widespread abuse. But RNIB says that of the 800,000 badge holders, only 24,000 are blind. So while the proposed change would make no significant change to the number of holders, "it would have a deleterious effect on the life style of many visually handicapped people."

Major shake-up at the DHSS

When the Prime Minister reshuffled her ministers last month for what is probably the last time before the General Election, it was the Department of Health and Social Security which was most affected.

Out went Minister of Health, Barney Hayhoe, and his deputy, Ray Whitney, allegedly for not defending the government's record on the NHS with enough gusto.

Tony Newton, Minister of State for Social Security, was moved across to take over health, while his former No 2, John Major, 43, moves up to become Minister of State for Social Security.

Two new parliamentary under-secretaries have been appointed. Mrs Edwina Currie, 39, is junior minister for health. She is MP for Derbyshire South, a former member of the Social Services Select Committee and ex-chair of Birmingham Social Services Committee. She has already been defending the NHS with enough enthusiasm to win notoriety around the country.

Nicholas Lyell, a QC and MP for Mid-Bedfordshire, is junior minister in social security.

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ISAAC

A chance for cheaper computers

Dr Janet Larcher, Education Development Officer (Microelectronics) for The Spastics Society reports on this year's conference

The fourth conference of the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) took place in Cardiff last month. It attracted delegates from 21 countries.

With 3 days of 7 parallel sessions to cover, plus exhibition stands, planning a timetable was a challenge, let alone giving a full report of the conference.

Papers could be loosely grouped into two main categories. One was the technological aspects of augmentative communication, eg the compatibility of input devices across computers and the question of lexicon size versus speed of access. The other covered the effective use of these aids for developing communication skills in young children, establishing and maintaining communication, and improving competence and training.

Until now input devices, eg expanded keyboards, have rarely worked with more than one computer. As a result, users could not choose a computer just because the computer and its software were suitable to the task. Also, they had to ensure that a computer was compatible with existing input devices and suited the user's capabilities.

At the conference, both American and European delegates agreed to move towards compatibility and indeed the TRACE centre in Wisconsin (which coordinates standards for communication devices in America) accepted some UK practices as the basis for new international standards. This means that new input devices should be available immediately for all computers and the resulting worldwide sales should, hopefully, lower prices.

People are growing more aware that while "we have the technology", we have not always increased the real communication abilities of non-speaking people. The larger the vocabulary, the higher the likelihood that the user can say what he or she wishes. But larger vocabularies are slower to access and therefore impede or destroy the flow of conversation.

A suggested compromise was to have a device which provides interrupt and maintenance phrases that support the flow of conversation, leaving the slower method for conveying specific information. Once again, the disabled person needs advice and training on how to use the communication aids effectively.

Are we developing communication skills effectively in the young non-speaking child? We can rarely enable children to initiate conversation.

One idea put forward was that instead of mum writing about events in a note book which goes back and forth to school, she might send in 2 or 3 objects related to the events of the weekend for the child to point to. This way the topics for discussion would be initiated by the child not the teacher.

A book and a paper were repeatedly recommended by speakers. Both are full of practical ideas and suggestions for developing and improving communication skills. *Communication Programming for the Severely Handicapped: Vocal and Non-Vocal Strategies* by C Muschelwhite and K W St Louis, 1982, is published by College-Hill Press of San Diego, California, and "Communication Interaction Between Aided and Normal Speakers" by Arlene Kraat, 1985, is available from the Canadian Rehabilitation Council for the Disabled, 1 Yonge Street, Suite 2110, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

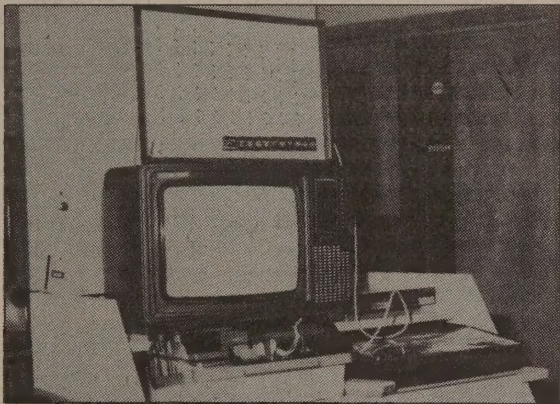
STAR SHIP ENTERPRISE, OR ELECTRIC CHAIR. A GALAXY OF WEIRD AND WONDERFUL METHODS I HAVE USED OVER 18 YEARS

Patrick Bates from the National Star Centre gave a humorous but thoughtful paper* from the viewpoint of a life-long consumer of alternative communication aids.

He now has an Elfin Personal Communication (PC) which also allows him to control his wheelchair and other devices directly with the same head switches.

To present his paper he used the "link-up" facility on the Elfin PC to control the scanning keyboard of the microcomputer and thus load and display his pre-prepared talk, which was also "spoken" using a voice synthesiser on the BBC system.

Patrick used Elfin's "My Voice", mounted on his chair, to ask for questions.



The BBC computer work station

When I was a baby (if you can believe it), Mum was feeding me. Suddenly she thought, Hang on, Patrick can't tell me if he has had enough. So she devised a method by nodding my head for yes and shaking my head for no. That was to form the basis for all my communication.

The Bliss system was the first major method I used. Before Bliss I just let others speak although I had things I wanted to say.

When I moved up a class at Craig-y-Parc, Mr James brought me out of my shell by not letting the others speak for me, and from that day to this I have never stopped.

(Patrick used a Possum for educational purposes and later a splink board with an E-tran frame. At the National Star Centre

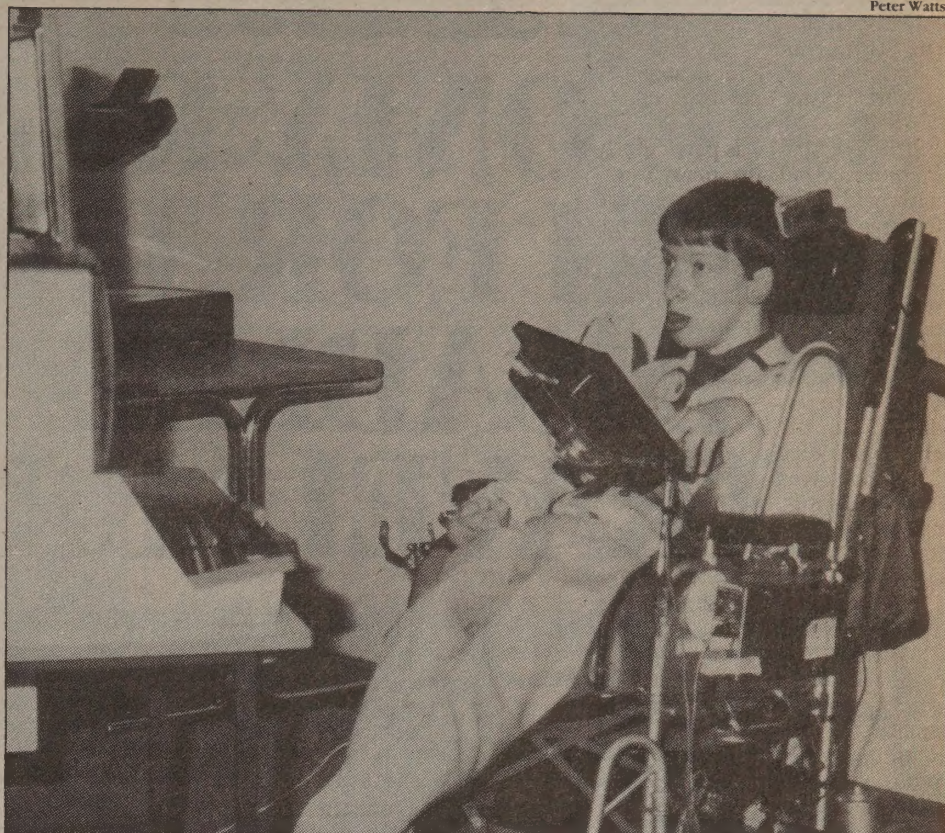
*This is an edited version

he was introduced to another method.)

This was a folding piece of card with 6 boxes and within each box 4 arrows showing up, down, left and right - and on each arrow there is a letter of the alphabet. The person I am communicating with sits or stands opposite me. Then I look at a box and when the person sees which box, I just look in the direction of the letter. It is a quick method.

In March 1984, Mum and I went on an information technology course at Porthcawl where we first met Mr Martin of Elfin. He thought I should have the portable version of the Elfin computer which would go on an electric chair and I would be able to drive the chair.

The next thing was money. Fortunately Llantwit Ma-



Patrick presenting his paper

jor Comprehensive School (our local school) raised over £4,000 for the computer.

After about 2 months of hearing nothing from Mr Martin (Stevie Wonder), he came up to Craig-y-Parc and demonstrated the BBC computer and an Elfin emulator. Of course I had a go, and within 2 months I had a BBC computer.

Stevie Wonder brought a prototype version of a portable communicator to the National Star Centre, and 6 months later he came up with my proper PC.

From using the various systems I have realised that if someone does not have a means of expressing himself or herself, the ability to communicate will not develop fully.

I feel this is caused partly by the parents not taking enough trouble to

find out what their children mean. Fortunately, that wasn't the case for me. However, once the computer has been tasted, the desire to communicate increases.

It is most important to have a robust and reliable system if you are in an institution or college, especially when the firm who made the thing works at the other end of Britain. Otherwise great frustration occurs.

Being able to move is of the utmost importance. It increases the desire and the opportunity to communicate.

My hopes for the future? I think all the boffins in the world should come together and invent a thought speaker.

Realistically, I hope to become a computer programmer.

atedly recommended by speakers. Both are full of practical ideas and suggestions for developing and improving communication skills. *Communication Programming for the Severely Handicapped: Vocal and Non-Vocal Strategies* by C Muschelwhite and K W St Louis, 1982, is published by College-Hill Press of San Diego, California, and "Communication Interaction Between Aided and Normal Speakers" by Arlene Kraat, 1985, is available from the Canadian Rehabilitation Council for the Disabled, 1 Yonge Street, Suite 2110, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Exhibition highlights

Minspeak from the Prentke Romich Company is a highly flexible communication aid and a valuable assessment tool. Its thematic approach to communication using pictures rather than words makes it suitable for the developmentally young, but if its coding potential was fully used, it could tax the most intellectually able. It is available in both touch and switch versions (25 selection techniques) but costs just over £2,000.

Also remarkably flexible is the Orovox text-to-speech synthesiser available from Speech Systems and costing only £360 (plus VAT). This artificial speech system can hold up to 500 words or phrases, half of which can be specified by the user. It operates

alone, but can only be used with a Concept keyboard.

Elfin Systems were demonstrating their portable communicator, speech prosthesis and infra-red remote control system.

Using the portable communicator, a one or two switch user can control a wheelchair, take notes (which can be edited via a BBC computer or sent direct to a printer or speech synthesiser) or control "My Voice".

My Voice is a speech aid which sounds "normal". Anyone can enter the 60 phrases or words to be associated with the device's keyboard. A phrase can be quickly altered by re-recording it.

The infra-red remote control system enables the wheelchair user to drive up to his computer or any other scanning device and begin work immediately without waiting to be plugged in.

My Voice is £950, the infra-red link £95 and the portable communicator £900.

While I am on the subject of equipment, readers might like to know that an emulator is now available to enable switch users to access the Amstrad computers. The Amstrad 8256, together with extra monitor and emulator will cost £799, and the Amstrad 8512 with extra monitor and emulator will be £899.

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The First International Winners all...

The Great Britain team dominated the first World Games for Disabled Youth held in Nottingham last month with a total of 111 medals from 111 events entered.

But they weren't the only winners. 204 young athletes aged 14 to 16 came from 16 countries and had a unique chance to meet others, learn new sports and compete on an international level.

The letters received by organiser Colin Rains of the British Sports Association for the Disabled are, he says, almost embarrassing in their praise.

One said the Games had been "a personal success for me... I made new friends from various countries and had a very good time."

A parent wrote that the Games "created a challenge" and gave "excitement and stimulation", providing "the opportunity to experience independence."

The first 3 days of the games consisted of coaching sessions, allowing athletes to try their hand at any sport. The water sports, including water-skiing, proved especially popular.

After a day of rest and visits round the sights of Nottingham, the young people returned to the Harvey Hadden Stadium in Bilborough for 4 days of high-class competition.

The British team shattered 20 BSAD national athletics records. In the 4 x 100m relay, Great Britain took an amazing 20 seconds off the previous best. 4 athletes broke 2 records apiece: John Rigg in the 60m run and shot (B1), Justin Bower in the Javelin and discus (W1), Marie Claire Bright in the discus and shot (S1) and Henrietta Collins in the shot and discus (W2).

Another outstanding performance in the field, where Britain's only real competition came from a strong West German team, was by Antony Nash in the B3 category for blind people, who threw the javelin 48.60m - "a hell of a distance" in the words of team manager Colin Grantham.

Richard Holmes broke the discus record for blind people by 6m as well as equalling the shot record.

In all, the Great Britain team won 27 golds in athletics, Canada coming second with 13. Canada excelled in the wheelchair track events where, according to Colin Grantham, not only were the athletes good, but their wheelchairs were technologically years in advance of ours, their large front wheels giving a smooth ride.

In swimming, Great Britain also won 27 golds. Jeanette Esling got 5 of the 23 BSAD national records broken. Ian Sharpe and Anna Tizzard both broke 2 records apiece. Jane Lawson, though breaking only one national record, won every event she swam in with outstanding times, and Michael Martin, who is an amputee, swam in all 4 relays and won 3 golds and 1 silver.

"It was the first time we swam together as a team - so we did extremely well, especially in the relay events," says swimming team manager Pat Warnes. "There was a good team spirit."

Colin Rains believes there are various lessons to be learnt from



Nottingham schoolboys Murray Campbell show off their spoils from the swimming.



Great Britain's champion javelin thrower Anthony Nash achieved a magnificent 48.60m in the B3 event.

Should physical...

Howard Bailey, Leisure...

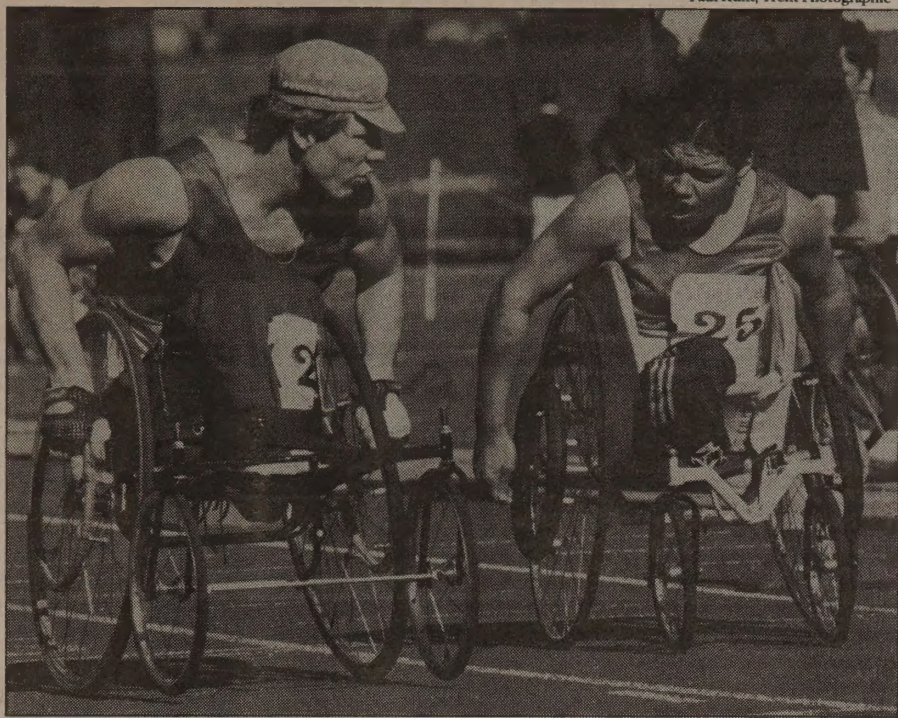
1986 has been a good year for international disabled sports. July the 6th World Cerebral Palsy Championships were held in Belgium; in August there were the World Championships for the Visually Impaired in Garmisch, and last month the World Games for Disabled Youth were held in Nottingham.

However, side by side with this expansion has come controversy about the direction of disabled sport should be taken. Should different disability groups be classified independently, or should they be amalgamated in a combined classification so that no matter what a person's physical disability he can compete with others of similar disability? Combined classification was tried in Garmisch and also at the games in Nottingham organised by the British Sports Association for the Disabled.

At present there are four different national and international categories for people with physical disability: paraplegic (under the International Mandeville Games Federation),

Games for Disabled Youth

Paul Hunt, Trent Photographic



Daw (left) and Cole from Canada give their all in the relay. Note the advanced, large-wheeled wheelchairs.



Ireland's Anthony Murphy on his way to a gold in the discus (W1). Olympic coach Eric Pearce looks on.



Canada's K. Ball competing in the long jump (S1) at the Harvey Hadden Stadium.

es. "All the countries ne opinion that this may st World Games for Dis-uth, but it should be by s the last," he said. "The onal Co-ordinating ee (the international anising games for peo- disabilities) must de- o they are going to in- re and when the event e held." Colin Rains be- should be held every 2 d hopes more countries involved next time.

problem is," he says, e countries don't place emphasis on develop- n programmes for dis- ple as we do. Many are years behind in terms coaching and competi- is event was a real eye- or them."

competing countries tralia, Austria, Bang- anada, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, Great Hong Kong, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, USA.

ent was backed by the Council, the National ster Bank, Nottingham- nty Council and Not- City Council.



ft) and Antony Garner competitions.

There be joint competition for all disabled athletes?

Officer of The Spastics Society, has reservations.

(ISMFG) ; amputees under the International Sports Association for the Disabled (ISOD); others, "Les Autres", also under ISOD; and people with cerebral palsy under the Cerebral Palsy-Sport and Recreation Association (CP-ISRA).

There seems to be general agreement that the basis for all classification systems in competitive sport should be functional ability and that there must be different classes to provide equal opportunities in competi- tion.

Hans Lindstrom of the Swedish Federation of Sport for the Disabled has been a driving force behind the use of a combined classification system.

He argues that there is a wish within the entire movement to organise joint competitions for many of the disabilities and this is the next stage of development. With the present limited resources it would make financial and organisational sense, he says, especially within developing countries. It would also bring together the limited numbers of physically disabled athletes and

encourage an atmosphere of unity in the world of disabled sport.

"The competitive idea is lost when buckets of gold medals are given to winners of a specific event when there are only minor differences in functional ability between the winners, and when half of them have won their medals in competition with only a few other competitors," he says.

On the surface, these arguments seem logical, straightforward and acceptable. But looking at them from the point of view of my own responsibilities, sport for people with cerebral palsy, I think some things have been overlooked.

It was evident in Gothenburg and Nottingham, for example, that athletes with a more severe functional disability were being ignored. Apart from the physiological problems, one reason for this could be that considerable resources are needed to allow these people to compete abroad. The support team has to be larger to provide the necessary back-up involved with being away from home and therefore the costs are higher.

In my view a team should be selected for ability, not for economic reasons.

Also, if countries select on a purely financial basis, many athletes who train all year round and are totally dedicated to their sport and are good enough to be selected, will be cut out.

Then there are the athletes with a hidden disability, like perpetual motor disfunction, which is probably more relevant to cp than to the other groups, who cannot be measured on a functional basis. How can they be offered equal opportunities?

Whatever position one takes on the issue of combined classification, it is imperative to keep an open mind and not be drawn into narrow emotive or parochial considerations.

We are in the business of creating the best possible structure for physically disabled athletes which meets their needs.

Sport must come before disability. There is a world of difference between "disabled sport" and "sport for people with a disability".

VIEWPOINT

"It makes me bloody angry that disabled people are treated so impersonally"

by Mike Kender

About 10 months ago I moved to 28 King Henry's Walk, a hostel for people with physical disabilities run by the London Borough of Islington.

I came from a very archaic institution run by The Spastics Society and I wish to draw your readers' attention to the way some disabled people are made to live and the way their lives are run for them. Where I was before my life was run for me and where I am now my life is my own.

Although it makes me feel great to be here with my new found freedom, it makes me feel bloody angry that people are treated so impersonally.

Perhaps I can best explain the difference between the two places by comparing a typical morning.

In my former place if I didn't remember to ask permission for a lie-in I would have to get up between 7.00am and 8.00am in the morning. The staff would come into my room and start dressing me without any instruction on how I wanted to be dressed. One of the reasons for this is that they might have to get more people up within the hour.

Here you get up when you want to and also the way you get up is up to you. The staff wait for your instructions.

When it was breakfast time the staff had to feed 2 or more at once - and that was on a good day. Breakfast was always the same. I had no choice about what I ate and when I complained, no other residents

would support me.

Breakfast here is a lot more enjoyable because I have what I can afford as we all buy our own food. Eating is a lot more enjoyable too because the help I receive is a lot more personal.

At 9.00am in my old place it was time for school. They didn't call it school but that's what it was. (I am in my late twenties.)

Here I can follow my own interests and run my own life. Here I am an unemployed adult and not a silly little kid.

At my old place, if you weren't able to feed yourself at lunch time you had to have your lunch at 12 o'clock in the same way as breakfast. If we were very, very lucky we had a choice of two meals which wasn't up to much.

Here I don't have any lunch as my breakfast is sufficient for me. It's my life - I am the boss.

The point I am trying to make is that at my old place I was treated as a number which devalued me as a person, whereas here I am treated as an individual who has rights. If I mess my life up what business is it of anyone else's?

Although I have nothing to do with The Spastics Society I would like to help the people who are living in these places. At the moment they are told they are in the best places and I would question that. Also, they are made to feel grateful for anything and everything.

Why should they be grateful for not being allowed to live like the majority of the population?



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OUTLOOK

Television

Just like any other sports programme

Multi-Games'86 produced by Interface (C4, 31 August), covered the Stoke Mandeville Summer Games.

This is the third Interface sports programme and by far the best. It did not drift into other programme styles such as arty documentaries or political discussion, but stuck to straight coverage of the games themselves, just like any other sports programme.

Adrian Metcalfe's excellent commentary was informative and not condescending; Christine Booth's direction was succinct; and producer Alan Snell's informal interviews brought out the warm personalities of the competitors. Well done, and may we have more!

A few months ago I drew your attention to a forthcoming BBC 1 series, **Call Me Mister**, on the understanding that it was to be about a disabled detective.

Now the series has begun I find the character exists, but he is not the central figure. Indeed, in the first 80-minute episode on 5 September, the disabled detective did not appear until 20 minutes before the end! However, in the second episode he had more air-time. Let's hope it continues.

The central character is Jack Bartholomew, an Australian policeman whose father is murdered during a visit. The first episode concentrated on the capture of the killers and the beginning of Jack's fight to obtain his share of his father's inheritance, which is contested by his brother and sister. In the second episode, Jack is struggling to find a job that will enable him to stay in Britain while the inheritance argument continues. So he becomes a partner and leg man in the detective agency.

The agency is run by Fred Hurley who has polio and is in a wheelchair. Why the character was destined to be disabled, I'm not sure. Jack could easily have been partner and assistant to an able-bodied Fred. Fred has enough personality quirks not to need a disability. It is peripheral to the series.

Call Me Mister is a very entertaining, clever show, but in terms of advancing disability on TV it achieves little.

The vital issue of insufficient sources for pre-natal care was given a 12-minute airing on 4 **That It's Worth** (C4, 23 September).

For those unaware of the facts in this emotive but rather dully presented report, it would have been a revelation. But if you missed it, nobody could blame you. The series is mainly about consumer affairs and coming after babies' dummies, a dodgy high street store and best buys among washing-up liquids, viewers may not have stayed for this significant report. Good motivation, but wrong context.

Watch out for...

Mind's Eye (C4, 1 October to 19 December) on aspects of mental health, and a season of adventure documentaries (C4, Thursdays, beginning 20 November) which will include **Breakthrough Disability**, about an able-bodied/disabled expedition down a ferocious river in Iceland.

Chris Davies

Theatre

Stronger than Superman

This play has been intelligently and sensitively adapted from Roy Kift's original musical version, which was commissioned by the Berlin Grips Theatre and performed internationally during the United Nations Year of the Disabled.

It sets out to explain the condition and effects of spina bifida.

Through warm, witty dialogue we are exposed to the prejudices, misconceptions and general lack of understanding that able-bodied people so often have of people with disabilities.

The central character is Chris, a boy of 10 who has spina bifida, convincingly played by James Greaves.

Chris has a wise head on young shoulders, and as the play develops he puts his wisdom to good use, skilfully explaining about spina bifida - what it is - what it is not - how it happens.

The story is of a mother (Shani Solomons) and her two young children (James Greaves and Jane Guernier) who have recently moved to a new house in a new area.

Apart from the lack of adequate facilities for people with disabilities - no ramps - no bath hoist - no stair lift - the house is even further from the special school that Chris usually attends.

The representative of the social services, Mr Barraclough (Tony Davies) who oozes all the slimy charm one might expect from a second-hand car dealer, believes that the answer to the family's problems is to split them up by sending Chris to a residential school.

The children greet this suggestion with the hostility it deserves.



Superman Chris (James Greaves) swoops to Lois Lane's rescue.

But Mum, who, on top of everything else now has to take the family's washing to the laundrette because her washing machine has finally given up, finds the suggestion mildly attractive and tells Mr Barraclough that she will give the matter some thought.

Meanwhile, the children come up with an alternative solution - Chris should go to the local school which is just around the corner from their new house.

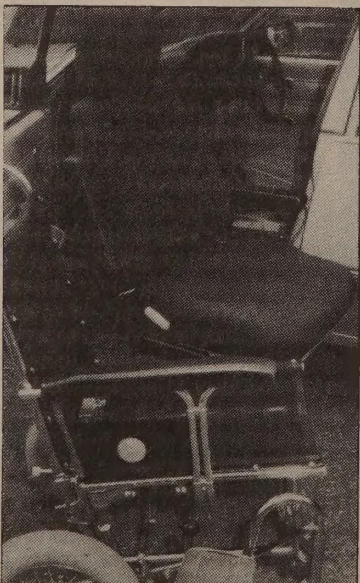
All they have to do is to per-

suade Mum that integrated education is the answer to all their problems. No easy task, even for Superman. Will they succeed?

There is no doubt that the play successfully removes many myths and misconceptions surrounding spina bifida. But it wastes a golden opportunity to highlight the misuse and abuse of language about disability. For example, there is no reference to cerebral palsy even though the word "spastic" is used as a noun throughout the story.

Motoring

Swivel seat takes the trouble out of travel



The 180 degree Travel Seat.

Disability Now has for some time been advertising the 180 degrees Travel Seat for passengers in cars. Having tried it, I feel the adaptation has advantages for the passenger who has difficulty getting into a conventional car seat as well as saving anyone assisting a disabled passen-

ger a great deal of struggle.

The Travel Seat has 3 locking positions - one inside the car, one at the door sill and the other outside the car. This enables the seat to be brought outside the car and the person transferred from a wheelchair. It can then be swung to the door sill and into the car. Once inside, the seat can be fully reclined to give extra leg-room. This is particularly helpful to those with stiff joints.

The seat is very comfortable with a 3-positioned lumbar support, adjustable headrest, and arm rests which can be swung away when not needed. It is possible for the passenger to operate the swivel-action seat independently, but it does necessitate leaning behind and clamping a lever when the seat is in its locked position on the door sill. This may be difficult, particularly for people with cerebral palsy and limited hand control or those who find it difficult to turn. The problem can be remedied, however, by attaching a strap.

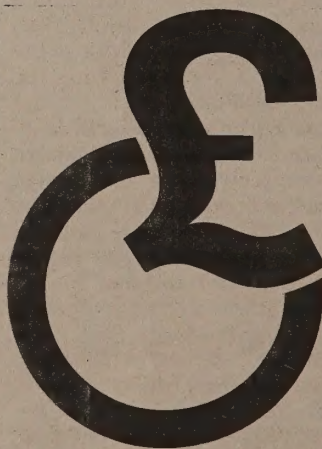
The whole operation is made possible by a heavy-duty curved bar beneath the seat which can be transferred easily when changing a car. The Travel Seat can be installed while you wait and can be fitted to most cars except the Fiat Uno, Suzuki and a 4-door Saab.

A model for the driver's side will soon be available but this will have to be fitted in conjunction with a tiltable steering wheel which will slightly add to the cost.

The Travel Seat costs £475 (inclusive). Head and armrests are

optional. An order form, including a statement for VAT exemption is available from Marketability, Units 3 & 4 Cowhyne Lane, Colyton, Devon EX13, 6AA. Tel: (0297) 53311

Merle Davies



There's no such thing as a free lunch - and **Disability Now** is no exception.

The newspaper costs The Spastics Society 40p a copy or £4.80 for a year's supply. At the moment it comes to you free.

If you enjoy reading **Disability Now** and would like to see it continue, please send us a donation. £1 or £1,000, everything is welcome!

Please make out cheques and postal orders to The Spastics Society, and send them to

Gayle Mooney
Room 2B
Disability Now
12 Park Crescent
London W1N 4EQ.

Nevertheless, the Off Centre Theatre Company proves that limited financial resources cannot "handicap" true talent and I sincerely hope that this play will have a longer public life than is presently budgeted for. Funds for the production come mostly from sponsorship, donations and some box office revenue - but further financial support is needed if more people are to enjoy this refreshing and optimistic play.

Edel Muselle

For further information about the Off Centre Theatre Company contact: Tony Davies, 20 Tregaron Avenue, Crouch End, London N8.

Look out for...

Heated Ice and other poems, by Nikki Barker, and **Take Two**, by Sharon Kennedy and Mark Dower, are poetry collections by talented young writers with a physical disability. Some of the poems are directly concerned with disability and the attitudes it evokes but most are about the personal experiences of the writers in all spheres of life. Available from Gavarnie Publications, 15 Legion Way, East Wittering, Chichester, W. Sussex. Both £1.95.

Phoenix is a new quarterly magazine for physically disabled people who are interested in literature and the arts. The first issue is a blend of prose, poetry and reviews, including some prize-winning entries in the 1986 Spastics Society's Literary Competition. It is edited by Roland Humphrey and produced on a word processor. Four issues £2.00, available from Phoenix, 19 Woad Lane, Great Coates, South Humberside, DN37 9NH.

The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden has greatly increased access for disabled people for the 1986/87 season starting next month. Thanks to sponsorship by Paul Hamlyn, 20 wheelchairs can now be accommodated for some performances. Dates from the box office, Tel 01-240 1066.

Books

Coping with Rheumatoid Arthritis

by Heather Unsworth
(W & R Chambers £2.95)

In this book Heather Unsworth (senior occupational therapist at the Odstock Hospital, Salisbury) covers both the medical and practical aspects of rheumatoid arthritis that a person living and coping with it encounters every-day.

In sensible language, she explains a little about the symptoms of RA, giving reasons for the pain and inflammation and saying that it affects everyone differently.

The medical information covers medication, pain-killers, anti-inflammatory drugs and the use of splints to support inflamed joints. The advice is given in a sensible way and is not frightening.

For someone newly diagnosed as having RA, the introductory sections on rest, exercise and the care of joints are filled with detailed and clear illustrations. Gentle exercise is certainly helpful to ease stiff joints as long as it is done with care, but you must not over-tire yourself. A very good section about conserving energy gives advice on how to make sure you create the right

Continued on page 11

Last month British Telecom produced a new, free, guide to its services called *Action for Disabled Customers* which is also available in braille or on tape.

At the same time it launched a film, *Better Lives*, which shows the advances in modern technology that are helping disabled people with telecommunications. It is designed for BT's customer service staff and for use by the public and organisations concerned with disability, for whom it is available on free loan.

It is evident that British Telecom has a caring appreciation of the problems of disabled people. Last year (1985/6) it spent £1.7m on research and administration to develop services for us. Although it cannot satisfy everyone's needs, it is doing its level best.

As the only disabled person present at the launch, I found myself treated with great hospitality. A genuine interest was shown in the comments I made—particularly about the cashless payphone Phonocard.

At present blind people cannot identify the correct way of inserting the Phonocard. Although BT is exploring ways to put this right, the indentation that has been produced on the card is, in my opinion, not definite enough, particularly for elderly or blind people or those who have poor sensitivity. BT will undertake further research, even though this is technically difficult because the card incorporates a hologram.

On display at BT headquarters were several pieces of equipment mentioned in *Action for Disabled Customers* which are real innovations for disabled people. (For those not available from BT I have given an address.)

The **QWERTY** phone (£400 and available soon) is a computer print-out switchboard link for the deaf which relays messages and displays them on a screen.

The **Claudius Converse** (£173) consists of a keypad connected directly to the phone which can "speak" up to 64 phrases, including emergency messages, at the touch of a but-

BT shows it cares

as Lin Berwick discovered when she went along to BT headquarters



Lin Berwick tries the Tribune, with, from l to r, Peter Allocco, the BT engineer at Wembley who visits disabled customers, Geoff Knight of BT Action for Disabled Customers, and Laurie Heatherington, its chairman.

ton. You can select the phrases most suitable for your needs and they can be programmed by the company. The Claudius is only available by mail order. Contact BT Materials Dept (M6323), Queens Drive House, 5 Dudmore Road, Swindon SN3 1AH, Tel: (0793) 484678.

The great advance for disabled telephone users is the cordless phone. There are two new ones. The **Curlew** has an easy-to-operate memory, though the keys are very close together. The **Freeway** is a different shape, easy to hold, with better spaced keys and less controls but no memory. The Curlew is £129 and the Freeway £99.95.

The **Tribune** is going to be the standard replacement telephone in the future. Keys are well spaced and rounded, with a dot on number 5 for easy identification. I am particularly

pleased about this because it is very helpful for blind people and yet is standard equipment. This phone features last number re-



David Owens, technical manager of BT ADC, explains the Curlew.

dial. (£3.25 quarterly rent or £35.95 to buy.)

There are also 2 large numbered keypad phones. In my opinion the better one is the **Dialatron Big Button** because of the shape and spacing of the keys. There is a 10-number memory and last number re-dial. Available from Dialatron, 9 Bridge Place, Belgrave Road, London SW1, Tel: 01-834 9166.

Great strides have been made in the use of inductive couplers and dialling aids. The **Tyne** (about £75) for example, will store up to 50 numbers, any of which can be re-dialled by pressing one button.

The **Yeoman Plus** dial telephone comes in 4 versions: lamp signal for the hard-of-hearing; amplification of incoming speech; combined lamp signalling and amplification; and amplification of outgoing

speech. (On rental only at £4 per quarter.)

Two loud speaker telephones deserve a mention. The **Facility Phone** (£159.95) has a 2-way loudspeaker and 40-number callmaker, a visual display, clock and call timer; while with the **Fonadek Telephone Amplifier** (about £50) you do not need to hold the handset to make a call. Walsh Fonadek Ltd, 243 Beckenham Road, Beckenham, Kent, Tel: 01-778 7061.

As an ex-telephonist who is blind, I was very interested to learn about the **Vanderhoff Dynamic Telephone Directory**, which enables you to store up to 1000 entries. Searches can be made for name, extension, job title, department, etc. It can be linked to the **Braid Voice Synthesiser**. Contact Vanderhoff Communications Ltd, Bermuda Road, Nuneaton, Tel: (0203) 341111.

The booklet, *How to use British Telecom's new public phone*, is also available on tape or in braille. But if you don't want the bother of finding a phone box—and have £2,500 to spare—a **Cellnet** telephone allows you to call anywhere, anytime. It would be of great assistance to disabled drivers who could call for help from their cars. A wonderful piece of equipment. But it is very heavy to handle and the keys are close together. Information from Cellnet Centre, 142 Goswell Road, London EC1V 7PE, Tel: 01-251 5155.

For the computer user there are various aids to communication, such as **Ceephone**, an adaptor for the BBC and Commodore microcomputers, which allows messages to be sent and received simultaneously. Demonstrations are available at suppliers' showrooms. C&E Computing Services, 161 Bells Hill, Barnet, Herts EN5 2SY, Tel: 01-441 7301.

Action for Disabled Customers (the blue booklet) contains full information about equipment and services for disabled people and is available from your telephone area sales office. British Telecom has a stand at NAIDEX.

Books

Continued from page 10

balance between rest and activity.

There is an extremely useful section on how to cope with a young family which is written from personal experience.

Information is given on foot care. I find that good chiropody helps my feet to feel comfortable and relaxed. This alone can improve your attitude to pain on bad pain days.

The section dealing with personal relationships stresses that

hold tasks—how to turn on taps or lift plates are shown—and hints on how to cope with personal hygiene and dressing.

The illustrations throughout the book are delightful. They made me laugh. Laughter is the finest way I know of easing the burden of disability.

It is a pleasure to be able to recommend this book to both people newly diagnosed with RA and to seasoned veterans who need to be reminded on bad pain days that nothing is impossible.

Paul Wilkes

Nuggets of Pure Gold

Collected and edited by John Kelly
(Westgate Books, 52 Ridgeway, Weston Favell, Northampton, NN3 3AR, £1.10, incl. postage)

Universal Pictorial Press



Sir Robin Day is a contributor.

"Beware of all enterprises that require new clothes." Henry Thoreau (1817-1862). This is a favourite maxim of the novelist Margaret Drabble and is one of 120 entries in *Nuggets of Pure Gold*—an anthology by John Kelly of the favourite quotations of well-known people.

Other contributors to this booklet include Sir John Gielgud, Sir Robin Day and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The actor Nigel Hawthorne quotes Henry Clay (1777-1852) — "I had rather be right than be President."

A number of politicians are included. Margaret Thatcher's choice of quotation is from George Bernard Shaw — "Freedom incurs responsibility, that is why men fear it."

And—for political balance!—Neil Kinnock quotes Abraham Lincoln — "Let us have faith that right makes might; and in that faith let us to that end dare to do our duty as we understand it."

All proceeds from the sale of *Nuggets of Pure Gold* will go to The Spastics Society.

Kathy Johnson

Future Friends is a monthly paper for people who are lonely. It is largely made up of advertisements from those wanting to find friends, companionship or marriage. 75p from newsagents or The Portia Trust, Portia Centre, 15 Senhouse St, Maryport, Cumbria.



There! That was easy wasn't it?

everybody needs reassurance from their partner or close friend that they are still sexually attractive. I was pleased to see this discussed. Pain often distorts and changes a person's perspective on their body.

In two other sections there are ideas on coping with house-

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AIDS walkout prompts public support in Swansea

Six staff have walked out of Swansea and District Spastics Association's day centre, concerned that they may catch AIDS from a recently-admitted young carrier of the disease.

But sympathetic group members, parents and members of the public are flocking to help run the centre in their absence. The group is convinced it has taken every possible precaution to prevent a health risk.

The haemophilic boy received AIDS (Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome) antibodies during a blood transfusion.

According to T Gwyn John, chairman of the Swansea group, he was admitted to the day centre after an application from his parents and social worker, strictly in line with the constitution of the association.

"When there was some concern shown by several people about the admittance of this youngster, steps were taken to seek expert advice," he says.

Dr Colin Griffiths, a national AIDS expert, came to the Longfields centre twice to talk to parents, committee and staff. Later a chief administrative medical officer and a consultant haematologist were called in, and, says Mr John, provided further reassurance.

"We did not treat this matter lightly and made every possible effort to consult and discuss with all concerned bearing in mind that medical advice must come from experts in the field," he says.

But 3 part-time staff left Longfields as the boy arrived at the start of September. One of them, making an anonymous statement to the *South Wales Evening Post*, said: "We are not trained or equipped to deal with a contagious disease. An AIDS carrier is not contagious but we are, for various reasons, concerned that an infection could trigger off AIDS. We don't want to be unfair to the boy but we are terribly worried."

Since then 3 more staff have quit.

Mr John says he is happy with the situation as long as normal precautions are taken. "There's no-one walking around in surgeons' masks," he says.

"All the parents and youngsters are volunteering to help out, and work in the kitchen. We've had several members of the public just ringing up and volunteering to help."

One offer of help came from an 83-year-old lady, who wrote into The Spastics Society wanting to look after the AIDS carrier.

"I am 83 but perfectly strong and healthy and nearing the end of my 'four score years and ten'. It won't matter what happens to me," she wrote.

According to AIDS counsellor Donald Anderson only direct sexual contact or blood-mixing can spread AIDS.

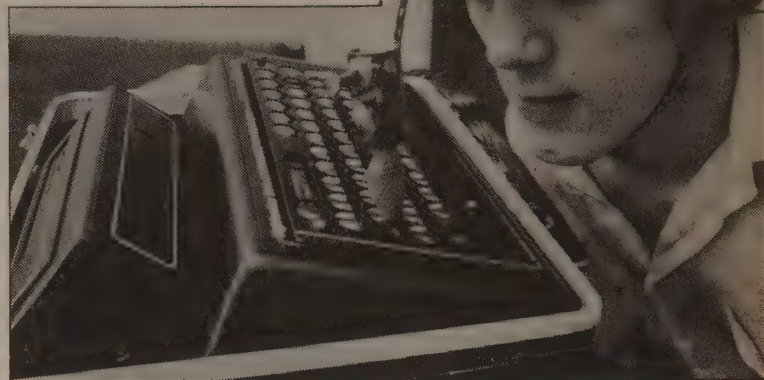
An explanatory training video, aimed at calming health professionals' fears about AIDS, has been launched by the Royal Society of Medicine. You Can't Catch Aids By... is available from the Film and Television Unit, Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole Street, London W1M 8AE. Price £23 including postage.

Yearbook competition

The Spastics Society's Local Group Yearbook competition will be judged on 14 October by Larry Walters, Andrew Ross and Anita Maunsell. The winners will be announced at the AGM on 1 November.

LOCAL GROUP NEWS

Edited by Simon Crompton



Darryl Fellows operates his new communicator by means of a head-controlled "finger".

Double dose of microtech gives Darryl the chance he needed

A severely disabled man has found his first words and his first job thanks to microtechnology.

21-year-old Darryl Fellows, who is unable to speak, was presented with a £600 electronic communicator by charity workers on 20 August - the very day he was offered a 12-month Community Programme place writing computer programmes for use by disabled children in special schools. He started work on 1 September.

Darryl's job followed 7 months of battling by Betty Fisher, an organiser for the Pontefract and District Spastics Society, to prove to social services and Community Programme organisers that Darryl could do the job. "The Community Programme hasn't taken on anyone

with disabilities as severe as this before," says Betty Fisher.

"It was really a situation that no-one, beyond those caring for Darryl, had envisaged. No-one thought of the possibility of him working until I stepped in and believed in him," she says.

Since becoming resident at Amersall House, Scawthorpe, Darryl has shown a remarkable talent for working on computers. Now he will be able to carry out his work for the Community Programme's Micro-electronics Project from Amersall.

His new communicator will help him in his work. Betty Fisher raised more than £200 for the machine in 5 days, from a charity shop in Hatfield she set up specially. The Spastics Society also donated £100.

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Tonbridge group lets young people set sail

Kent and Sussex Courier



Toni Arthur lavishes champagne on the new boat to launch it. On her left is Robert Soper, who last year sailed with the Jubilee Sailing Trust.

Messing about in boats was the order of the day at Bewl Bridge Reservoir on 2 September, when the Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge Spastics Society's new tri-maran was officially named.

TV personality Toni Arthur, presenter of *Play School* and *Playaway* and the group's recently-elected president, poured a bottle of champagne over the 3-hulled single-

handed boat, which was bought with £1,700 raised locally in door-to-door collections for The Spastics Society.

She also met young children with cerebral palsy who had gathered for a picnic by the lake, and some of the young disabled adults who will be putting the new boat through its paces.

For the last year the group has held a weekly sailing club.

"Members of our group in their early 20s often stay at home with not a lot to do," says Liz Ough, chairman of the Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge group. "We're very much concerned with getting these people involved in lots of activities in the week."

The tri-maran, named Endeavour, is the first boat the group has owned. It is a new design especially suitable for people with disabilities because it is very difficult to capsize.



Adrienne Ough, daughter of the group secretary, gets a kiss from Toni Arthur in return for her bouquet.

PEOPLE



Neil Jarvis, who has been blind from birth, has been elected President of Sussex University's Student Union - the first blind student to have occupied such a post.

He wants to campaign against education cuts, attacks on students' living standards and poor access for disabled students.

"Up to now their interests have been ignored," he says. "It is very difficult to get round the University in a wheelchair. There are steps up to the library but no ramp."



A disabled housewife has won a factfinding trip to Holland to find out more about home-working and how it could develop job opportunities for people with disabilities.

Jane Glover, 36, from Swansea, earned the expenses-paid 2-week trip in the American Express Travel Industry Competition run in conjunction with Opportunities for the Disabled, an employment agency for disabled people.

She arrived in Groningen on 28 September, where she is studying at the Dutch Fokus Foundation. This runs a project involving disabled employees working from home and communicating via electronic office systems. She is looking at the benefits of home-work which Britain might build on, and also disadvantages such as isolation.

Jane, who had polio as a child, studies social work at Gwent College of Higher Education and is taking an Open University degree course. She worked as a telephonist at the GPO for 5 years before leaving to have a family.

"At my first ever interview, for a job as a shop assistant, I was told that my disability would prevent me from doing the job effectively," she says. "It's a problem which nearly all disabled people face."

"The Dutch project is extremely interesting as the whole idea of working from home presents a very real prospect of allowing disabled people the chance to follow a career and increase their independence."

The Hephaistos school for intelligent disabled children, due to close next year, has added another to its string of success stories.

Andre Cockburn, who has severe cp, has gained grade A in both Maths and Further Maths "A" levels - and he is only 15. He already has a Computer Science "A" level.

Three years ago Andre was in *Disability Now* when he passed his Maths "O" level at age 12.

He will be one of only 6 pupils at Hephaistos for its final year. His father, Peter Cockburn, is very sad to see the school close. "It has greatly helped Andre in his achievement," he said. "I'd like to see it help other children like him."

Andre hopes to read Maths at Southampton University, which has a hall of residence where disabled and able-bodied students live together.

A starry future for Carol

The Stars Organisation for Spastics has a new director.

Carol Myer, former director of the White Lodge Centre in Chertsey, takes over from Sheila Rawstorne, who is retiring.

Mrs Rawstorne was The Spastics Society's first employee and had been director of SOS since its foundation in 1955. Under her leadership the organisation built up a membership of 300 stars who have raised funds and stimulated public awareness of cerebral palsy.

"I'm very sad that the law didn't change in time so I didn't have to retire yet, but I'm delighted to be handing the directorship over to someone as energetic and capable as Carol," said Mrs Rawstorne.

Carol Myer trained in special education and was director of White Lodge for 13 years. She met Sheila Rawstorne in the early years of her work there and



Carol Myer gets a farewell card from James Worsnup at her White Lodge leaving party.

the two have been firm friends ever since.

Carol is no stranger to the world of showbiz and stars. Through her involvement with amateur operatics she met several celebrities who became patrons of White Lodge, including

Cliff Richard and Mike Yarwood.

"SOS needs to be taken into the new age of thinking for disabled people," she said. "It's a lot more than just a fundraising organisation and I hope to emphasise the public awareness side."

CLASSIFIED

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SHERPA 240 DELUX PRIVATE AMBULANCE. 10,000 miles, S reg, v good condition - 1 owner, adapted for below wheelchair. Ratcliff tail lift fitted. Easy to drive, ordinary licence. £4,500. **BEC ELECTRIC WHEELCHAIR.** Good condition. New drive motors and wheels fitted 3 months. Back extension support, new battery and charger. £600. Contact Mr B Saunders, Tel: (0296) 624055 (6pm-9pm weekdays).

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VESSA OUTDOOR KERB-CLIMBING WHEELCHAIR, right hand, reconditioned with battery charger. £600 ono. Tel: (0635) 35737.

Find-A-Friend

MAN, 47 with cp, living in the South. Enjoy visiting places of interest and playing Chess. Is there a male or female out there who would like to be my penfriend? If so, please write to Malcolm Dipple, 32 Ship-ton Way, Basingstoke, Hants RG22 6JX.

WORKING YOUNG MAN, own home, plus car, will travel, wishes to correspond with any young lady, any age, any interests. I have many interests - sport, music, dining out, movies etc. I also like pets. All letters answered. Please write to Box No 130, *Disability Now*, address on page 16.

DISABLED MAN, 37, partially deaf, would like to correspond with people of 25+ in similar position. My interests include hiking, horse riding, art, children

and good music. Write to Box No 131, *Disability Now*, address on page 16.

DISABLED WIDOW, 57, seeks the company and friendship of a gentleman who understands disabled people. My interests are music, sport, jigsaw puzzles and travel. I drive my own car. Birmingham. Please write to Box No 132, *Disability Now*, address on page 16.

58 YR OLD WIDOW, disabled (arthritis), would like to correspond with male penpals of same age group. Hobbies: driving; letter writing; tv; holidays abroad; countryside. Dog lover. Please write to Box No 133, *Disability Now*, address on page 16.

Jobs

MOTHER'S HELP/NANNY, with experience of cp babies, to help us. One cp son, 3½, one fully-fit 5yr-old just started school. Physio knowledge an advantage. Own self-contained bedsitter, shower and kitchenette. Gerrards Cross, South Bucks. Tel: (0753) 885000

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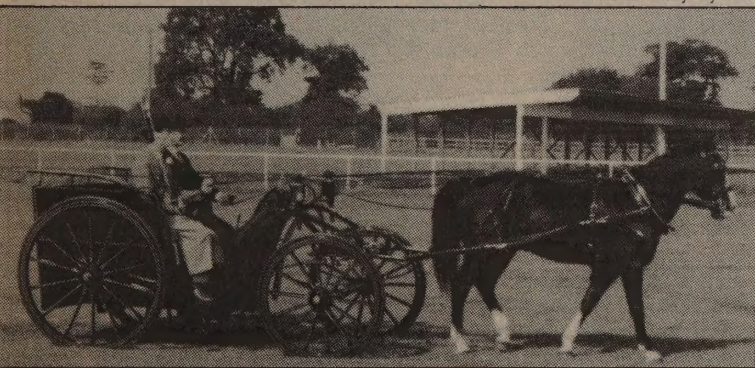
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EXCHANGE VISIT TO FRANCE. French mother of a teenage son with cp would like to organise an exchange holiday with similarly disabled boy in the London area. Interested parents please contact (in French, if possible) Mme Messemakers, 43 allée Mozart, Le Plessis Tre vise 94420, France.

CLASSIFIED RATES: £1.50 per line with a minimum charge of £6. Advertisers are invoiced after the advertisement appears. Find-a-Friend column is free (NB All ads are free for members of The Spastics Society or a TSS-affiliated local group.)

Four wheels in a wagon

Anthony Reynolds



Nick Banard drives out in style.

If you think the horse and cart went out with the crinoline - think again. For Nick Banard, who has cp, learning to drive a horse and cart has opened up a whole new world of fun and independence.

Thanks to funds raised by a Blue Peter Appeal and administered by The Spastics Society, Nick now has his own £1000 customised cart. It has a special seat which can be taken out to make room for the wheelchair.

Nick, 19, from Mutford, Suffolk, has always loved horses, but being in a wheelchair caused problems when learning to drive a horse and cart.

Coach-builder Mike Daniels from Earl Soham, and wheelwright Joe Harvey from Ipswich came to the rescue with a design which could accommodate the

wheelchair. With timber donated by Connells of Ipswich the blueprint became a reality.

"The cart looks lovely," said Nick. "It's like a vintage vehicle the way it is designed. I look forward to doing a lot of different shows in it."

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Haringey Council is committed to Equal Opportunities. It has already begun to work for a fair deal for the lesbians and gay men who live, work or study in the Borough. A Sub-Committee is soon to be established to act as a link between the Council and the lesbian and gay communities.

We advertised for 6 Unit Workers and a Senior Administrative Officer to co-ordinate and develop initiatives designed to ensure that Haringey provides services which reflect the needs and wishes of lesbians and gay men in the Borough. We have recruited 5 Unit Workers and a Senior Administrative Officer which leaves one vacancy for a Unit Worker.

You must have direct experience of the lesbian or gay communities. The team has been recruited with regard to experience of the black, minority ethnic and disabled communities, and you must be committed to challenging discrimination on the grounds of disability, race and sex. We would particularly welcome applications from persons with disabilities and from the Greek or Turkish speaking communities, as these groups are currently under-represented within the Council's workforce.

Previous applicants need not re-apply. The London Borough of Haringey is a multi-racial community. As people from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups are under-represented in the workforce we particularly welcome applications from them.

Application forms and further information contact Angela O'Connor, Community Services, London Borough of Haringey, 35 Station Road, London N22 6UW. Tel: 01-881 3000 ext 3526.

Closing date 21st November 1986.

HARINGEY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Share Your Problems

With Margaret Morgan

"Living with parents who are ageing day by day can be very difficult"

Michael, from the North of England, writes:

"I have had considerable help from David Daniel, The Spastics Society's senior regional social worker in my area, who does a great job trying to keep a lot of people happy. It seems a shame that I don't get the same kind of support in the way of social work and advice from the local authority.

Round here there is a social worker for blind and deaf people and also one for those who are mentally handicapped, but when it comes to physically disabled people provision is thin on the ground. So you can see how thankful I am that The Spastics Society shows an interest in me and my future and that I am treated as a person and not just as an object to be put away in an institution.

There is a lot of talk about community care, and it could be argued that I am living in the community already. But when you live with parents, who are getting older day by day, it can be very difficult. As I live in a village I have to travel by car or taxi, and my parents don't always feel like taking me where I want to go. Obviously I respect my parents, though at times I feel smothered and over-protected, and I am sure that I speak for a lot of other people when I say this.

My parents are at home with me most days as they have retired, but many of the things that we were going to do when they retired have never materialised. Now we seem to have different views on almost everything. I wonder if this is my fault?

My mother finds it quite difficult to talk to other people with disabilities. Do you think she might sometimes feel like this towards me?

I have been hoping that The Spastics Society would start a group in my area and that there would be other people with cerebral palsy who might be interested. I wonder if the Alpha groups are all that they are said to be?

I would like to be involved in something like this, and I shall be glad to have your advice about how to set up a group locally."

You have raised a number of interesting and important issues. It is good to know that the Society's social worker has been helpful. You are quite right in saying that specialist support services for people with physical disabilities, particularly young people, are very limited in many parts of the country. The Spastics Society tries to fill some of these gaps, but in spite of increases in the number of social workers employed each has a large area to cover.

There is no way in which the Society could, or should, take over work for which the local authorities have a statutory responsibility. So it is very important that people like yourself keep in active contact with your local social services department and continue to remind them of the services that you and your family need.

I am sure The Spastics Society's Alpha development and research officer and the regional manager in your area will be glad to discuss with you the possibility of setting up a local group. I do hope that you will be able to get something going, so that you will have "more power to your elbow" to campaign for community-based services which do not rely on the family for everything.

The points you make about living at home as a disabled adult with elderly parents are valid and must be echoed by many others. It is quite understandable that you and your parents, like older and younger generations in most families, will have very different interests and viewpoints. It must be frustrating for you to be dependent for transport and, no doubt, other personal and domestic help as well.

On the other hand, most parents expect their adult sons and



Simon Crompton

daughters to have left home before they retire. Although your parents probably enjoy having a younger person around, they may well want to take things more easily now, while you, naturally, want to get out and about with men and women of your own age.

I expect you have been looking around for accommodation where you could live more independently, though I know that suitable vacancies are hard to find.

You say that your mother finds it difficult to communicate naturally with other disabled people and I know many others who have the same problem, particularly if there are speech problems. Some manage to overcome these inhibitions while others go on feeling embarrassed, especially when they have to make new relationships. I imagine that your mother will feel quite differently about you, though I am sure there will be times when both of you get frustrated with each other.

People who have close relationships often find it difficult to talk over personal matters and I wonder whether you have ever tried to discuss your feelings about this situation together? Being able to express how you really feel can be very positive. Misunderstandings so often arise which can usually be sorted out quickly, provided that everyone involved really listens and tries to understand the other person's point of view.

I do hope that having recognised some of the problems you will be able to talk them over with your parents, and thank you very much for writing so frankly.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chive Youth Travel Bursary. Applications are invited from hearing impaired young people, aged 16-25, for 6 £100 travel bursaries for 1987. Projects that will be considered are those which have a broad educational purpose, such as expeditions or visits to foreign organisations for hearing impaired people. The deadline for applications is 31 November. For further details of the bursary and how to go about making an application write to

Mark Taylor, Development Officer, Youth Exchange Centre, Seymour Mews House, Seymour Mews, London W1H 9PE. Tel: 01-486 5101.

Action for Birds. The Young Ornithologists' Club is encouraging groups of young people from schools, youth organisations and the YOC itself to put up bird feeders or tables in the grounds of hospitals, centres for elderly or disabled people, schools and housing estates without gardens. Both birds and people will benefit - the birds will be helped to survive the winter and people will enjoy watching them. The project takes place 29-30 November. If any group is interested in joining in, please contact Celia Spouncer, Action for Birds, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds SG19 2DL. Tel: (0767) 80551.

The Spastics Society Christmas Catalogue is now available, packed with a wide range of cards and gifts including puzzles and toys for children, kitchen gifts and table and tree decorations for a festive Christmas. For a copy of the catalogue write to Maura Taylor, Spastics Cards Ltd, PO Box 66, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs DE14 3LQ.

What's On

Courses at Castle Priory

Young Children With Very Severe Learning Problems - for health visitors, home teachers and pre-school counsellors and others providing services for children who have profound difficulties. 21-23 November. Tuition £47, residence £42, non-residence £15.

Personal and Social Development: Young People With Special Needs - a workshop for teachers, care staff, therapists and volunteers working with adolescent groups. 1-3 December. Tuition £47, residence £42, non-residence £15.

The Child With Cerebral Palsy in School - a course for teachers and educational advisers concerning the special needs of these children in a variety of settings. 5-7 December. Tuition £47, residence £42, non-residence £15.

Derbyshire Language Scheme - places on this course are strictly limited so that maximum individual help can be possible. 8-10 December. Tuition £120 (including materials), residence £42, non-residence £15.

For more information about any of these courses, write to Castle Priory College, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 0HE. Tel: (0491) 37551.

Conferences and Leisure

Growth and Change - Building a Future is the theme of the annual conference of the British Society for Music Therapy which takes place on 18 October at the Maria Assumpta Pastoral and Educational Centre in London. The conference is open to everyone interested in the use of music in health and education and will show how music therapy activities have developed in the UK and what is planned for the future. Fee £12.50 (£7.50 for students). Further information from Denize Christophers, BSMT Administrator, 69 Avondale Avenue, East Barnet, Herts EN4 8NB. Tel: 01-368 8879.

Disabled People in the External Environment is the theme of a series of seminars being run by the Centre on Environment for the Handicapped: The External Environment and the Experiences of Disabled People (21 October); Pedestrianised Areas (4 November); The Orange Badge Scheme (14 November) and The Way Ahead (21 November). Of interest to planners, transport organisations and disabled people, they are taking place at The Policy Studies Institute and The King's Fund Centre (both fully accessible). £138 for all 4 seminars or £40.25 each. Further details from Alice Noon, Seminar Officer, CEH, 35 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BJ. Tel: 01-222 7980.

Time Off For Women on 24 and 25 October, has the theme of women's work for peace and the environment and against poverty and racism. All women are welcome on 24 October at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 from noon till 10pm, for a day of speakouts, stalls, exhibitions, entertainments and food. 25 October will be spent at Greenham Common. WinVisible - Women with Visible and Invisible Disabilities - are helping to organise the event and further information is available from them at King's Cross Women's Centre, 71 Tonbridge St, London WC1. Tel: 01-837 7509.

Blissymbolics Communication Elementary Workshop runs from 27-31 October at Corseford School, Howwood Road, Milliken Park, Kilbarchan, Renfrewshire PA10 2NT. Tel: (0505) 72141. The fee is £75 which includes training materials and meals, (accommodation is not included). Further information and applications to Mrs Sheila Coutts, Chief Speech Therapist, Corseford School.

Therapy in Music for Handicapped Children is a weekend course being held at The Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy Centre on 1-2 November. It is for teachers, parents and others interested in working with handicapped children. For further details contact The Secretary, The Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy Centre, 3 Leighton Place, London NW5 2QL. Tel: 01-267 6296.

Practical Problems of the Disabled Mother is a course for professionals on 11 November at the Disabled Living Centre, St Mary's Hospital, Leeds. The fee is £10, including lunch and coffee. For further information contact Mrs V Manby, Senior Physiotherapist, The William Merritt Aids & Information Centre, St Mary's Hospital, Green Hill Road, Armley, Leeds LS12 3QE. Tel: (0532) 793140.

Deafness - No Handicap to Music? is a day course taking place on 15 November at the Royal Northern College of Music to encourage the opportunities available for deaf children and young people in music. It will be of interest to professionals, parents and deaf young people themselves. Further information from the Music Department, c/o Medlock School, Wadesdon Road, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Manchester M13 9UR.

Cerebral Palsy and Allied Disorders in Young Children is a course being held on 17-21 November at the Cheyne Centre for Spastic Children. Areas to be covered include cp, visual disorders, communication disorders and perceptual training. There will be lectures and demonstrations by visiting lecturers and by therapists and teachers from the Centre. The fee is £105. Further details from Course Administrator, Cheyne Centre, 61 Cheyne Walk, London SW3 5LX. Tel: 01-352 8434, ext 203.

National Independent Living Care Schemes Conference. Islington Social is holding this conference on 27 November at the Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre in London. It is open to everyone interested in the problems of providing and developing independent living. Contact Alan Desborough, Community Liaison Officer, 28 King Henry's Walk, London N1. Tel: 01-249 9573.

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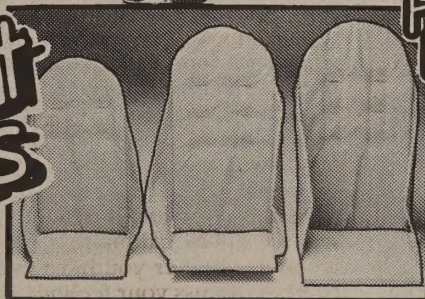
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Safety checks urged after lift accidents

Karen Wingate reports

Owners and managers of nursing and residential homes have been advised to carry out immediate checks on homelifts. The advice, issued by the Health and Safety Executive last month, follows a number of serious accidents last year in which homelift cars plunged down their shafts killing or injuring passengers.

The HSE has warned that: "Failure to follow this advice could lead to the sudden descent of the lift cage with possibly fatal results."

The British Standards Institution, which sets safety standards, is now preparing new guidelines for the installation of lifts in residential homes.

Owners were warned of possible danger in February after a series of accidents. In July 1985 a lift plummeted down its shaft in a nursing home in Abergele, North Wales.

Three more incidents followed in September. A failed lift in a nursing home in Rochdale killed 2 people and injured 4, and in Great Yarmouth a similar accident killed one person and injured another. In Doncaster a lift jammed in a residential home trapping 4 elderly people for 4

hours before firemen rescued them.

In January 1986 a nurse suffered whiplash and an elderly patient broke a thigh when the lift dropped at a nursing home in Falmouth.

Research by the HSE's engineers has shown that even homelifts which meet the required standards are not strong enough for use in such homes. All the accidents involved homelifts designed for light domestic duty only.

There are about 1,200 lifts of this type in private nursing/residential homes in Britain.

The HSE says that all lifts now in use should be brought up to an acceptable standard. Unsuitable 3-inch gearboxes should be replaced by May 1987 and additional safety devices fitted.

Lifts conforming to the present standard, without new gearboxes and safety devices, are likely to be restricted to use in private houses only under the BSI's new guidelines. A full review of the specifications for homelifts is expected early next year.

Some manufacturers have already taken the initiative and upgraded their homelifts.

BICE '86: We made it!

Simon Crompton



Rick Delvin, who along with fellow cyclist Dave Williams (right) organised the cycle tour of Britain and Ireland for 10 people with disabilities, gave the cyclists a champagne welcome as they completed their trek at London's Marble Arch on 30 September. The tour, which took 36 gruelling days, has raised over £20,000 for Cerebral Palsy Overseas, to use for projects in Turkey, Sri Lanka, Brazil and Portugal.

Residential service is piecemeal, report says

Under half the disabled people aged 16-24 in residential care are in places which are supposed to cater for them. Many are in hospital wards for the long-term care of old people - a policy discouraged by the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act.

This is one of the findings of a new report which concludes that the residential service for disabled people is piecemeal, and far from being an integral part of a comprehensive national service for disabled people.

The report criticises the "plainly inequitable" system of social security payments, whereby people in residential centres get more than twice the maximum awarded to those who stay at home.

More money should be put into services in the community and the Government should promote better co-operation between National Health Service hospitals and local-authority-managed residential homes, says the report. Not only is the will to collaborate often lacking, but there is little consensus about how and by whom it should be organised, it says.

The *Young Disabled Adult* is based on a survey of residential

homes and hospital units for disabled people carried out by Dr John Harrison for the Royal College of Physicians.

At its launch last month Dr Harrison said: "The report is intended to show the concern of the College in an area where hospital doctors haven't shown as much concern as they might have."

"It's no exaggeration that there is chaos on the ground," he said.

His survey shows that resources are unevenly distributed across the country. For example, The Spastics Society's centres are concentrated in the South-East.

People with severe physical and mental disabilities may find themselves accepted by psychiatric services in one area, mental handicap services in another or geriatric services elsewhere.

There are specific recommendations for the medical ser-

vices. These include encouraging more active involvement with severe disability and consulting others more. The need for organised collaboration between the NHS, local authorities and the voluntary/private sector is stressed.

The NHS's Young Disabled Units need urgent review and their role should be expanded to include planned short-stay care and emergency admissions, says the report.

Amanda Jordan, head of campaigns at The Spastics Society, welcomes the report.

"It highlights the problem which many young disabled people face in finding appropriate residential care within their own community," she says.

"Dr Harrison rightly points out that the present system of financial support has a strong bias towards residential care which many young people don't want. We need swift solutions to the problems the report raises."



Lee Osborne, who has cerebral palsy and took part in the BICE '86 round-UK cycle (see story above right) is one of 75 winners of Radio 1's Young Achiever awards. These are given to people who have made great personal achievement and helped others despite their disabilities. The winners were honoured at a star-studded party last month, where Lee had the chance to meet his hero, pop star Feargal Sharkey.

The crisis the Government is neglecting

continued from page 1

It also came just a week after the *Daily Mirror* reported that a fully-equipped 240-bed maternity and gynaecology unit in Mrs Currie's own constituency is lying unused because the hospital cannot afford to pay staff. Mrs Currie was reported to be unaware of the situation.

Despite undertakings by 2 successive secretaries of state that the Government will establish minimum standards in staffing and equipment to safeguard babies, nothing has yet appeared.

It has been estimated that there is a national shortfall of 40 per cent for neonatal intensive care cots. Of those available only 9 per cent have a staffing ratio greater than one nurse per cot, while the recommended ratio by the British Paediatric Association is 4 per cot.

Although perinatal mortality (deaths of the foetus after the 28th week of pregnancy and deaths of the child in the first

week after birth) has increased since 1978, The Spastics Society is concerned about the variations from region to region. In the West Midlands there are 12.3 perinatal deaths in every 1,000 births, while in the South West region there are 8.6.

Especially alarming is the increasing gap in perinatal mortality rates between rich and poor.

"Health education only touches on the symptoms and cannot address the real issues of poverty and inequality of resource allocation which Mrs Currie seems to reject as a link with ill health," says John Cox.

Such is the concern amongst health professionals, health authority members, voluntary organisations and consumers of care that they have now come together to form a new organisation - Action for the Newborn. This will be a campaigning body keeping the lack of resources for neonatal care in the public eye, and collating information about needs and resources. It will be officially launched next year.

See Sic, page 2, and cartoon, page 3.

Disability Now

Published by The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Tel: 01-636 5020.

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Editorial Secretary Kathy Johnson

Circulation Gayle Mooney

Advertising Don E. Neal,

Kingslea Press Ltd., Central

Buildings, 24 Southwark

Street, London SE1 1TY.

Tel: 01-403 3115.

Typesetting by Foremost

Typesetting Ltd., 182 Union

Street, London SE1.

Printed by Senews,

Hastings and 108 Temple

Chambers, Temple Avenue,

London EC4. Tel: 01-

583 3190.

The views expressed in

Disability Now are not

necessarily those of The

Spastics Society.

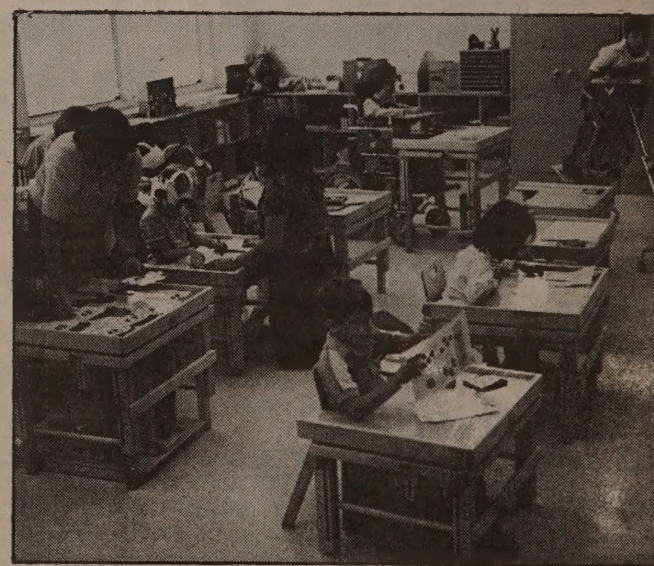
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